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MEMOIRS

OF

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,

EARL OF ORFORD.

BY

WILLIAM COXE, M.A. F.R.S. F.A.S.

ARCHDEACON OF WILTS.

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MEMOIRS

OF

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

PERIOD THE FIFTH:

From the Resignation of Lord TOWNSHEND *to the Dissolution of the Parliament.*

1730—1734.

CHAPTER 38.

1730—1731.

Walpole conducts the foreign Transactions—Inclines to a Reconciliation with the Emperor—Negotiations which preceded and terminated in the Treaty of Vienna—Treaty of Seville carried into Execution—Transactions in Parliament—General Satisfaction—Character of Earl Waldegrave, the new Embassador at Paris.

THE resignation of Townshend placed Walpole in a new point of view. Hitherto he had scarcely taken any public part in foreign affairs, and only indirectly influenced the current negotiations, either through the private interposition of the queen, or the medium of his brother, affecting to leave the sole direction of those

matters to the secretary of state. But the removal of Townshend instantly changed his situation. The duke of Newcastle for some time continued to act the same subordinate part as before; and the new secretary, lord Harrington, received his impulse from the minister of finance, or from his brother Horace. Walpole, therefore, now took a more open and decided part in the regulation of foreign transactions; and his opinion seems to have principally contributed to the renewal of the ancient connection with the house of Austria, with whom England had been long in a state of open defiance.

He had sagaciously appreciated the advantages which resulted to England from the alliance with France, which had effectually injured the cause of the Pretender, and counteracted the schemes of the Jacobites. He was aware that France, during the minority of Louis the Fifteenth, or under the government of a prime minister, like Cardinal Fleury, of a pacific and timid disposition, was a very proper ally in a defensive treaty, to check and prevent the designs of the Emperor, who had formed schemes and alliances detrimental to the security and commerce of England. He well knew that ministers of a free nation must sometimes be obliged to contract new engagements, in opposition to those powers with whom they would have been willing to live in the strictest friendship, upon just and honourable terms.*

He had therefore concurred with Townshend,

* The Interest of Great Britain steadily pursued, p. 26.

in warmly promoting the alliance with France, and was not deterred by the popular outcry, that the measures of the cabinet were directed to lower our natural ally, the house of Austria, and exalt France, our natural enemy, from pursuing a plan which secured to England internal tranquillity and external peace. The improvement of our commerce and manufactures was a full justification of this wise measure.

But things were now considerably changed. The solid establishment of the house of Hanover on the throne of Great Britain, and the number of Jacobites who, on the quiet accession of George the Second, renounced their principles, had lessened the danger of internal commotions, and rendered the co-operation of France in favour of the Pretender, less an object of alarm.

The relative situation of France was also changed. Morville, the friend of England, had been dismissed from the office of secretary of state, and his successor, Chauvelin, the enemy of England, governed Cardinal Fleury. A reconciliation had taken place between France and Spain, and the ancient jealousy between France and England began to revive.

From this alteration of circumstances, France acted an indecisive and wavering part. When the Emperor, in opposition to the arrangements made by the allies of Seville, declared, that if Spanish troops should enter Tuscany, he would drive them out, it became necessary either to force him to execute that treaty, or to prevail

upon him, by the guaranty of his favourite object, the Pragmatic Sanction. Cardinal Fleury affected to co-operate with England, in obtaining the consent of the Emperor, either by force or persuasive means; but artfully threw obstacles in the way of both. Various schemes for effecting that end were proposed. It was the great object of England to prevent the invasion of the Low Countries, and to confine the seat of war principally to Sicily, or at least to Italy. It was the view of the French to extend it to the other parts of the Austrian dominions, with the hopes of making conquests on the side of Germany, and the Low Countries.

When the two nations were actuated with such discordant views, no co-incidence of opinion could be expected. France objected to all schemes, either of compulsion or compromise, and endeavoured to throw the blame of inactivity on the English and Dutch. Meanwhile Spain complained bitterly that the treaty of Seville was not executed, and that Parma and Tuscany, for the attainment of which she had acceded to the quadruple alliance, were on the point of being lost.

Walpole now perceived that the strict alliance with France could no longer be maintained. He had two objects in view; the one, according to his own expressions, to avoid a war with the Emperor, for fear of its consequences; and the other with Spain, on account of our trade. The only method of effecting both these purposes was, to renew the ancient connection with the

house of Austria, and lure the Emperor to accede to the treaty of Seville, with a promise of guarantying the Pragmatic Sanction.

On these interesting topics he maintained a correspondence with his brother, Horace Walpole, embassador at Paris; combated his opinion in favour of continuing the friendship with France, and gradually persuaded him to approve a negotiation with the house of Austria.

The Emperor had, before the treaty of Seville, endeavoured to open a separate negotiation with England, and since its conclusion had thrown out hints to our embassador at Vienna, that a thorough reconciliation might be easily effected. In consequence of these insinuations, the British cabinet decided on making the attempt, and lord Harrington announced this resolution in an official dispatch to Mr. Robinson, who had succeeded earl Waldegrave in the embassy to Vienna.*

An answer being transmitted, that the Imperial court was inclined, with every appearance of sincerity on their part, to renew their ancient connection with England, on fair and reasonable conditions, farther instructions were forwarded from the secretary of state, together with the plans of treaties and declarations to be signed by the Emperor, both in regard to the disputes with England, and to the king's German affairs.†

While this negotiation was pending, the king

* September 14-25, 1730. Correspondence, Period V.

† Lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson, Dec. 4-15, 1730.

of Spain, irritated at the delay, declared, on the 29th of January, by the marquis of Castellar, his embassador at Paris, that he considered himself free from all engagements contracted on his part by the treaty of Seville, and at full liberty to adopt such measures as should be most suitable to his interests.

Soon after these transactions, the duke of Parma died, and the duchess, his widow, declared herself pregnant. The Emperor, with the secret connivance of England, took possession of Parma, making at the same time a declaration, that should the duchess be delivered of a son, the introduction of the Spanish troops should take place; if of a daughter, Don Carlos should instantly receive the investiture of Parma and Placentia, from the Emperor and empire.

In opening this negotiation, the British cabinet had declared the determined resolution of the king to make the treaty of Seville the basis of the new alliance, and the securing to Don Carlos the succession to Tuscany and Parma was held out as an indispensable article. The minister was aware that the best method to obtain peace was to be prepared for war, and that the only successful means for carrying the treaty of Seville into effect were, to be ready to enforce the execution by vigorous measures. The speech which the king delivered from the throne on the meeting of parliament, January 21st, was drawn up by him in conformity with these sentiments. After declaring, that every measure was adopted to prevent, by an accommodation, the fatal con-

sequences of a general rupture; and that it was impossible to state the supplies which would be required for the current service of the year, until peace or war should be decided upon, it concluded with these strong expressions:

"The time draws near, which will admit of no farther delays. If the tranquillity of Europe can be settled without the effusion of blood, or the expence of public treasure, that situation will certainly be most happy and desirable. But if that blessing cannot be obtained, honour, justice, and the sacred faith due to solemn treaties, will call upon us to exert ourselves, in procuring by force, what cannot be had upon just and reasonable terms."*

The negotiation was carried on with much address and secrecy, and although some rumour of it transpired, and hints were thrown out in the Craftsman; yet the debate on the side of the minority was conducted on a supposition, that England was preparing to execute the treaty of Seville by force, and an amendment to the address was proposed, that the king should be requested not to concur in a war against the Emperor, either in Flanders or on the Rhine. But when this proposition was negatived, a more plausible amendment was suggested by opposition, who artfully availed themselves of the prejudice conceived against the king for his attachment to Hanover. They proposed to insert, that they would support his majesty's engagements so far as they related to the interest of

* Journals.

Great Britain. In answer to this proposal, Walpole did not hesitate to declare, "That such an expression in their address would seem to insinuate, as if the king had entered into engagements that did not relate to the interests of Great Britain, which would be a great instance of ingratitude towards the king, who in all his measures had never showed the least regard to any thing but the interest of Great Britain, and the ease and security of the people; as all those who had the honour to serve him could testify, and upon their honour declare. He hoped every member of that house was convinced, that the king would never enter into any engagement that was not absolutely necessary for procuring the happiness, and insuring the safety of his subjects; and therefore it was quite unnecessary to confine the words of their address to such engagements as related to the interest of Great Britain."*

Nothing was said directly in answer to this assertion, though so much might have been said. It was only urged, that to support hostile operations against the Emperor on the Rhine, was absolutely destructive to the interests of Great Britain, and tending to the total subversion of the balance of power; that the house had good reason to believe no minister would dare to advise the king to such a measure; and the member who used these strong expressions, concluded by opposing the amendment as unnecessary. The address was therefore carried without

* Chandler.

a division. It was also drawn up by the minister, and after acknowledging, in terms of gratitude, the king's goodness, "in endeavouring to have the conditions of the treaty of Seville fulfilled and executed, in such manner as might best secure a general pacification, and be conformable to his engagements with his allies," declared, "that they would, with all chearfulness, grant such supplies as should be necessary for the service of the ensuing year, and effectually enable the king to make good his engagements."*

The unanimity and vigour of this address, which was equally adopted by the house of peers, had a great effect on the transactions abroad, and gave energy to the negotiations of Vienna.

In consequence of these measures, lord Harrington expressed to the British minister at Vienna, the king's disapprobation of the delays and obstacles with which the Imperial court clogged the progress of the negotiations, replied to the counter project of the Emperor, gave farther instructions, and sent the ultimatum of the cabinet.

Notwithstanding these remonstrances, the ministry well knew that the obstacles were derived no less from the pertinacity of the Hanoverian, than the haughtiness of the Imperial court; and one of the great difficulties which occurred in concluding an accommodation,

* Chandler.

arose from blending the affairs of Germany with those of England.

Mr. Robinson had been particularly ordered* "to continue the greatest friendship and confidence towards Dieden, the Hanoverian agent at Vienna, and act in perfect concert with him in every thing, wherein the king's interests were concerned; and to employ his best offices and instances with the Imperial ministers, for procuring the most effectual redress and satisfaction to the king upon the several demands which Dieden was instructed to make to the court of Vienna."

These objects of contention between the Emperor and the king, as elector of Hanover, were so various, complicated, and delicate, that the treaty would never have been concluded, had the British minister at Vienna insisted, according to his official orders, upon a full and satisfactory answer to all the points in dispute. Fortunately, the cabinet of London, influenced by Walpole, had the courage to cut the gordian knot, which it could not unloose; lord Harrington, in a private letter, instructed Mr. Robinson† to sign the treaty with England, and refer the German affairs to a future discussion.

Another great difficulty in conducting this negotiation, arose from an erroneous opinion,

* Grantham Papers. Dispatch from lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson, $\frac{4}{15}$ December, 1730. Correspondence.

† Lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson. January 28th—February 8th, 1731. Correspondence.

formed by the Emperor, that the ministers of the English cabinet were disunited, and from a jealousy that the two Walpoles, who were known to direct the helm of government, were favourable to the alliance with France, and consequently hostile to the house of Austria. This notion had been supported by the duchess of Kendal, in her correspondence with the Empress, and corroborated by some leading members of opposition, who had long held a private intercourse of letters with the Emperor or his ministers.

This false opinion, together with the difficulty of settling the German affairs, suspended the signature of the treaty. In this moment of doubt and uncertainty, a letter* from Horace Walpole to Mr. Robinson, conveying the strongest assurances of his own and his brother's sentiments in favour of the Emperor, decided the Imperial cabinet, and hastened the conclusion.

The treaty was signed on the 16th of March, and is usually called the second treaty of Vienna, to distinguish it from that which was concluded in 1725. It was a defensive alliance, and stipulated a reciprocal guaranty of mutual rights and possessions; on the part of England, to guaranty the Emperor's succession, according to the Pragmatic Sanction; on that of the Emperor, to abolish the Ostend company, and all trade to the East Indies, from any part of the Austrian Netherlands; to secure the succession of Don

* February 9—20—1732. Correspondence, vol. 2, p. 92.

Carlos to Parma and Tuscany; and not to oppose the introduction of Spanish garrisons.

Thus was this great and difficult task of preventing a general war, accomplished with an address and secrecy that reflected high honour on those who conducted it. The treaty of Seville was carried into execution without force, and without breach of faith to any other power. To Don Carlos, Parma was secured, with the consent of the Emperor, and the eventual succession of Tuscany guarantied; Spain was satisfied with England; and the Emperor, gratified with the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction, considered this re-union as the commencement of a new æra to the house of Austria.

The satisfaction in England was full and complete. In fact, no event more disconcerted opposition, or raised the minister higher in the estimation of the public. It had long been a favourite theme of popular declamation, that his measures had a tendency to lower the house of Austria, and exalt the power of France. Their arguments were therefore now turned against themselves; the breach of the French alliance, and reconciliation with Austria, took away one plausible topic of raillery and invective.

The only popular objection to the management of foreign affairs now was, that England was entangled in a multiplicity of treaties and guaranties; that no rupture could take place in Europe, in which we should not be obliged to interfere as principals; that it was the steady interest of Great Britain to contract no burthen-

some engagement, and trust to her naval strength and insular situation for repelling all foreign attempts.

To this general objection a general answer was returned; that a nation, whose strength depends upon the flourishing state of trade and credit (inseparable from that of public tranquillity), whose commerce extends to all parts of the world, and is founded on compacts and stipulations with powers of different and incompatible interests; who has as many enviers as neighbours, as numerous rivals as there are commercial powers, must have a more extensive and particular interest to foresee and obviate those troubles, which, if not prevented in time, might occasion great disturbances, might place so large a share of dominion in the hands of one prince, as to endanger the liberties of the rest, and consequently interrupt her trade. People thus situated must provide themselves with foreign support, proportionate to the attempts that may be apprehended from the continental powers to their prejudice, which cannot possibly be secured but by reciprocal engagements, and by interesting themselves as deeply in the welfare of other nations, as they expect those nations to interest themselves on their behalf.

This compact having secured the consent of the Emperor to the introduction of Spanish troops, Philip revoked the marquis de Castelar's declaration, and acceded to the new treaty of Vienna; and the execution, which speedily followed, proved the sincerity of the Imperial and

British courts. After a few altercations between the Emperor and Don Carlos, the one claiming Parma as an inheritance, and the other insisting on conferring it as a fief of the empire, the Spanish troops landed at Leghorn, on the 20th of October, under convoy of the British and Spanish fleet. Don Carlos himself arrived on the 26th of December, and was put in full possession of Parma and Placentia.

In opening this negotiation, Walpole had been anxious not to irritate France, before he had conciliated the court of Vienna. He judged it prudent to send in the place of his brother Horace, who had returned from his embassy at Paris, a person agreeable to Cardinal Fleury, in whom he could implicitly confide. Lord Chesterfield had been recommended for that post, as a prelude to his being appointed secretary of state; but Horace Walpole represented to his brother, that his temper and habits would not accord with those of the Cardinal, and suggested the earl of Waldegrave, as more proper for so delicate a situation, who was accordingly nominated.

James earl of Waldegrave was descended from an ancient family in Northamptonshire, whose ancestors may be traced in a direct line to times anterior to the conquest. They were lords of the towns of Waldegrave, Twywell and Slipton, in the county of Northampton;* Sir Richard,

* As the account of the Waldegrave family given by Collins, is incorrect in many particulars, a more accurate statement is here added from family documents, communicated by the countess of

Waldegrave was speaker of the house of commons in 1382; and some of his ancestors received the estates of Navestock and Borely, in Essex, and Chewton in Somersetshire, as grants from Henry the Eighth.

In 1643 Sir Edward Waldegrave was made a baronet, and his great grandson, Sir Henry was, in 1685, created a peer, by the title of baron Waldegrave, of Chewton,* in Somersetshire, where the family then principally resided. On the revolution he followed the fortunes of James the Second, whose natural daughter, Henrietta, by Arabella Churchill, he had espoused, and to whom he had many and great obligations. He died at Paris in 1689.

His eldest son and successor James, of whom

Waldegrave: "Waldegrave, a Saxon by lyneall descent, lord of the "county of Northampton, had at the conquest one only daughter, "and her he married, by the conqueror's commandment, to Guerim "or Warin de Waldegrave of Normandie, by means of which mar- "riage Waldegrave the Saxon had a pardon granted him by the "conqueror, of his life and land, notwithstanding he bore arms "against him at Battle Abbey, on king Harold's part, which pardon "is yet extant, and was lately in the hands of the lords of the "manor of Waldegrave, &c. in the county of Northampton. This "town and manor was sold by Sir William Waldegrave, knight, in "the reign of king Henry the Eighth.

Waldegrave is of Saxon derivation, from *Walde*, and *Grave*, signifying the ruler of a *Walde* or forest. The ancestors of the present earl resided in different counties at different periods. A Sir Richard Waldegrave, who was speaker of the house of commons in 1382, married the heiress of Sylvester of Buers, in the county of Suffolk, and either himself or some of his descendants, more than once represented that county.—The grants of Navestock, Borely, and Chewton, probably occasioned the sale of the family inheritance in Northamptonshire.

* Collins's Peerage. Collinson's History of Somersetshire.—Article, Chewton.

we are now treating, was born in 1684, and educated in the Roman Catholic religion. In 1722, he entered into the communion of the church of England, and took his seat in the house of peers. His uncle, the duke of Berwick, being desirous to mortify him for having renounced his faith, inquired of him whether he had made his abjuration from political or religious motives, and used the expression, "*confess* the truth," to which he replied, "I changed my religion to avoid *confession.*"

When it was necessary to depute an embassador to Vienna, for the purpose of executing the preliminaries signed between England, France, and the Emperor at Paris, and of conciliating the Emperor, who had been dissatisfied with the king of England, lord Waldegrave was selected as the person whose mild and affable demeanour best qualified him for that task. George the First, who considered the mission as too great a condescension after the ill usage he had received from the Emperor, sent word that he approved the person, though he disliked the errand.*

Lord Waldegrave set out in May 1727, and arrived at Paris on the 14th of June. The difficulty of settling the complicated negotiations, and the events which followed the death of George the First, detained him in France nearly a year. He went to Vienna in April 1728. During his residence in that capital, he corrected the mistatement which the opposition in Eng

* Earl of Waldegrave's Diary.

land had transmitted of their strength, as well as of the weakness of the party that espoused the measures of government; and plainly showed that the divisions in the cabinet would not diminish the influence of Great Britain abroad. He proved to the Imperial ministers, that the preliminaries with Spain contained no condition hostile to the house of Austria, and were strictly conformable to the articles of the quadruple alliance. He threw out hopes to the Emperor of a future accommodation with England, and that the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction might be the consequence of acceding to the introduction of Spanish garrisons into Parma and Leghorn. He obtained a ratification of the preliminary articles between the Emperor, England, and France, and laid the foundation of the reconciliation, which Mr. Robinson carried into effect. He then returned to Paris, where he was appointed embassador extraordinary, on the resignation of Horace Walpole.

He filled this difficult employment ten years, during a period in which the disunion between France and England was gradually increasing to an open rupture.

For his services at Vienna, he was created viscount Chewton and earl of Waldegrave; and his exertions at Paris were rewarded with the garter. In 1740, he obtained leave to return, for the recovery of his health. He embarked for England, October 1740, and died at his seat at Navestock in Essex, on the 11th of April 1741, in the 57th year of his age.

He was in high confidence with Sir Robert Walpole, and was the foreign embassador in whom, next to his brother, the minister principally confided. Several letters which passed between them, and are printed in the Correspondence, prove the truth of this assertion. He conducted himself in his embassies with consummate address, and particularly distinguished himself by obtaining secret information in times of emergency. Though a man of pleasure, he pursued business, when business was necessary, with indefatigable diligence. His letters are written with great spirit, perspicuity, and good sense, and are peculiarly entertaining. He had so little the appearance of a man of business, that he was considered as incapable of writing such excellent dispatches, as he transmitted to England, and they were principally attributed to his secretary, Mr. Thompson. But this unjust imputation was soon proved to be false, when the embassador left France, and the secretary remained chargé d'affaires. The inferiority of his letters, to those which were written during Waldegrave's embassy, was striking, and carried a full conviction, that they were of his own composition. I am enabled also to do justice to the abilities of the earl of Waldegrave in this respect. A complete collection of his letters and dispatches, from 1727 to 1740, is preserved at Navestock, and the greater number are original draughts written in his own hand, with such erasures and alterations, as fully prove that they were solely his composition. They do

honour to his diplomatic talents, and prove sound sense, an insinuating address, and elegant manners.

The renewal of the ancient alliance with the house of Austria, had greatly displeased the French cabinet, and particularly disgusted cardinal Fleury, whose sentiments were always inclined to the adoption of pacific measures, who (however influenced by the counsels of Chauvelin) was convinced that the peace of Europe had been principally owing to the union between France and England, who appreciated the sentiments of Sir Robert Walpole as congenial to his own, and who, from long habits of intimacy and confidence, had contracted a partiality for Horace Walpole, which he was unwilling to relinquish. He considered this alliance as a prelude to incessant bickerings and future contests. Being also well acquainted with the domineering spirit of the house of Austria, and the eagerness of Charles the Sixth, to obtain from all the powers of Europe, the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction, he suspected that his assent to the treaty of Vienna was purchased with a promise on the part of England, to compel France to accede to that guaranty, and expressed in strong terms of indignation, his apprehension of secret articles derogatory to the interests of France.

The candid answer of the British cabinet, conveyed through the earl of Waldegrave, removed the jealousies of the cardinal. The king and cabinet in England, had now adopted, how-

ever unwillingly, the principles of the pacific minister, and De la Faye, under secretary of state, spoke the sentiments of Walpole, when he observed, that no one but a person totally ignorant of the British constitution, could for a moment have entertained such an opinion. The king, he remarked, could not engage in war without money, and must apply to parliament for supplies, if such a misfortune should occur. The parliament, who spoke the voice of the nation, might be induced to grant supplies for the purpose of excluding the Pretender, protecting merchants, preserving trade, or maintaining Gibraltar; but it would have been a monstrous conduct to propose an annual supply of five millions, for the purpose of compelling France to guaranty the Pragmatic Sanction. The nation could never bear such a proposition, and the minister who had the folly to make it, would justly incur the indignation of the people.*

The earl of Waldegrave being recalled from Vienna, it became necessary to depute a person of confidence to that court, on whom the Walpoles could no less implicitly depend; nor can a greater proof of their ascendancy in the cabinet be given, than that Mr. Robinson was the person who was chosen to fill this important situation at this critical juncture.

Thomas Robinson, afterwards knight of the Bath, and lord Grantham, was fourth son of Sir

* De la Faye to the earl of Waldegrave, August 16th, 1731, Correspondence.

William Robinson, baronet, of the county of York, by Mary, daughter of George Aislabie, of Studley Royal. He was brought up at Westminster school, and completed his education at Trinity College, Cambridge, of which he became a fellow in 1719. In 1723, he accompanied Horace Walpole as secretary to the embassy at Paris, and was distinguished by him with the highest marks of confidence and esteem. Under his instructions, and from his example, he acquired a consummate experience in diplomatic concerns. During the absence of the embassador, he was entrusted with the management of the English affairs, and conducted himself with so much address and ability, that he was not duped even by the affected candour of cardinal Fleury, nor deluded by the artifices of Chauvelin. Great command of temper, patience of contradiction, dignity of manner, frankness in receiving, and quickness in answering objections, rendered him peculiarly adapted to counteract the chicanery of the Imperial court, to soften the domineering and punctilious character of Charles the Sixth, and to conciliate the discordant tempers of the four ministers of the conference.* He continued at the court of Vienna from 1730 to 1748, when he was deputed embassador and joint plenipotentiary with the earl of Sandwich, to conclude the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

His dispatches are clear and perspicuous, so

* Prince Eugene, count Zinzendorff, count Staremberg, and the bishop of Bamberg.

explicit and descriptive, as to convey a faithful picture of the tempers and characters of those with whom he negotiated; and it was truly said of him, that he not only set down every word that was uttered in his conferences with the Imperial ministers, but noted even their looks and gestures. These interesting documents contain a copious, and almost uninterrupted narrative of the transactions between England and the court of Vienna, during a period of eighteen years, big with events, that threatened the downfal of the house of Austria, which was averted by the heroism of Maria Theresa, and the interposition of England. In 1742, he was made knight of the Bath, and soon after the conclusion of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, returned to England. He was successively appointed lord of trade, master of the great wardrobe, and secretary of state. In 1761, he was created a peer, by the title of lord Grantham, and died in 1770, aged seventy-three.

CHAPTER 39.

1731.

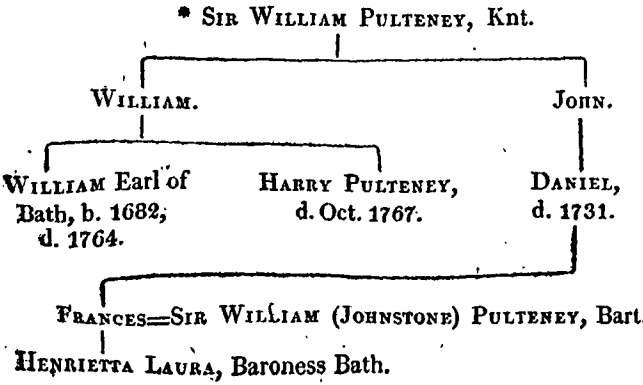
Biographical Memoirs of William Pulteney—Origin and Progress of his Misunderstanding with Walpole—Heads the discontented Whigs—Controversial Writings—Duel with Lord Harvey—Struck out of the List of Privy Counsellors.

TWO errors are principally to be avoided by an author that undertakes to write the life of a minister, who directed, during so long a period, the helm of government, and whose conduct materially affected the interests of Great Britain and the fate of Europe. The first is such a bias of affection and partiality, as to draw a panegyric rather than a history; the second, an indiscriminate prejudice against those who headed the opposition; and who, because they were enemies to Sir Robert Walpole, have been held forth by his partisans as devoid of all principle, and using, in every instance, their reprobation to his measures, as a cloak for malice and rancour. This last is the usual error of biographers; yet it appears extraordinary to a candid mind, that in order to raise the character of one great man, it should seem necessary to debase all his opponents, and that no allowance should be made for difference of opinion, or inveterate

habits and prepossessions. Because the party writers of opposition have loaded Walpole with invective, is it just to asperse his adversaries with equal virulence?

But in no instance has prejudice been carried to a greater height, than in drawing the character and conduct of Pulteney, the great leader of opposition. He, above all others, has been exposed to the fiery ordeal of party; not only by the friends of the minister whom he drove from the helm, but also by those who were once joined with him, and who, discontented at the disposal of offices, on the change of administration, railed at their former leader, because they were not promoted to those places which they claimed as the reward of their long perseverance.

William Pulteney* was descended from an ancient family, who took their surname from a place of that appellation in Leicestershire. His grandfather, Sir William Pulteney, was member of parliament for the city of Westminster, and


* Sir William Pulteney, Knt.
William.
John.
William Earl of Bath, b. 1682, d. 1764.
Harry Pulteney, d. Oct. 1767.
Daniel, d. 1731.
Frances=Sir William (Johnstone) Pulteney, Bart.
Henrietta Laura, Baroness Bath.

distinguished himself in the house of commons for his manly and spirited eloquence.

Of his father, William Pulteney, I find little upon record, except his birth, marriage, and death.

William Pulteney,* the eldest son, was born in 1682, received his education at Westminster school, where he greatly improved in classical literature; and being removed to Christ Church, Oxford, distinguished himself by his talents and industry, and was appointed, by dean Aldrich, to make the congratulatory speech to queen Anne, on her visit to the college.

Having travelled through various parts of Europe, he returned to his native country, with a mind highly improved; and came into parliament for the borough of Heydon, in Yorkshire, by the interest of Mr. Guy, his protector and great benefactor.

Being descended from a Whig family, and educated in revolution principles, the young senator warmly espoused that party, and during the whole reign of queen Anne opposed the measures of the Tories.

He first spoke in the house on the place bill, which he zealously supported, and some amendments being made by the lords, the discussion was, by the intervention of the ministry, postponed for three days; during which interval, means were found to gain over several who had

* I am indebted to the kindness of the bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Douglas) for some of these anecdotes, which relate to the early part of Mr. Pulteney's life.

opposed the bill, and the amendments seemed likely to be carried.

The young senator, indignant at this apostacy, and irritated that several had, in a few days, totally changed their opinions, animadverted in a few words on such political baseness. Alluding to Sir James Montague,* who after having distinguished himself in opposition to the amendments, now voted for them, he observed, "Cerberus has received his sop, and barks no more;" a remark which struck the house as ready and pertinent.

He had formed a just notion, that no young member ought to press into public notice with too much forwardness, and fatigue the house with long orations, until he had acquired the habit of order and precision. He was often heard to declare, that hardly any person ever became a good orator, who began with making a set speech. He conceived that the circumstances of the moment should impel them to the delivery of sentiments, which should derive their tenor and application from the course of the debate, and not be the result of previous study or invariable arrangement.

Pulteney and his partisans accused Walpole of being "a wretch who could not raise £.100 upon his own security;" in the same manner, the advocates of Walpole accused Pulteney, with equal injustice, of having received favours and bribes from the crown, and of ingratitude in forsaking the minister, to whom he owed great

* Afterwards solicitor and attorney general.

obligations. Both accusations were equally devoid of truth. Pulteney inherited from his father a very considerable estate, and had received from Henry Guy, the intimate friend of his grandfather, and guardian of his youth, who had been secretary to the treasury, a legacy of £.40,000, and an estate of £.500 a year. He received also with his wife Anna Maria, daughter of John Gumley of Isleworth, a very large portion, and increased this property, by the most rigid economy, which his enemies called avarice; but which did not prevent him from performing many acts of charity and beneficence.

During the whole reign of queen Anne, Pulteney uniformly espoused the side of the Whigs; and supported, both by his eloquence and fortune, the protestant succession in the house of Hanover. On the prosecution of Sacheverel, he ably distinguished himself in the house of commons, in defence of the revolution, against the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. When the Tories came into power, in 1710, he was so obnoxious to them, that his uncle, John Pulteney, was removed from the board of trade. He not only took a principal share in the debates of the four last years of queen Anne, while the Whigs were in opposition, but was also admitted into the most important secrets of his party, at that critical time, when the succession of the Hanover family being supposed to be in danger, its friends thought themselves obliged to engage in very bold enterprises to secure it. He was a liberal subscriber to a very

unprofitable and hazardous loan, then secretly negotiated by the Whig party, for the use of the Emperor, to encourage him to refuse co-operating with the Tory administration, in making the peace of Utrecht.

On the prosecution of Walpole for high breach of trust and corruption, Pulteney warmly vindicated his friend; and on his commitment to the Tower, was amongst those who paid frequent visits to the prisoner, whom he, with the rest of the Whigs, considered as a martyr to their cause.* He also engaged with his friend in defending the Whig administration, and wrote the ironical dedication to the earl of Oxford, prefixed to Walpole's account of the parliament, which I have before taken notice of.

Soon after the death of queen Anne, and before a message had been received from George the First, Pulteney, in answer to those who opposed the clause moved by Horace Walpole, for giving £.100,000, for apprehending the Pretender, should he land, or attempt to land, in any of the king's dominions, observed, "The protestant succession is in danger, as long as there is a popish Pretender, who has many friends both at home and abroad; the late queen was sensible of that danger, when she issued her proclamation against him; and the case is not altered by her demise. The nation will be at no charge if the Pretender does not attempt to land, and if he does, £.100,000 will be well bestowed to apprehend him.†"

His parliamentary abilities and uniformity of

* Pulteney's Answer. † Tindal, vol. 18. p. 298.

conduct gave him a very honourable claim to distinction on the accession of George the First. Accordingly, on the king's arrival, and before a meeting of the new parliament, he was appointed a privy counsellor and secretary at war, even in opposition to the inclination of the duke of Marlborough, who, as commander in chief, thought himself entitled to recommend to that post.* He was chosen a member of the committee of secrecy, nominated by the house of commons to report the substance of the papers relating to the negotiation for peace; and on the suppression of the rebellion in Scotland, he moved for the impeachment of lord Widrington, and opposed the motion to address the king, for a proclamation, offering a general pardon to all who were in rebellion in Scotland, who should lay their arms down within a certain time.

He was at this period so much connected with Stanhope and Walpole, that in allusion to the triple alliance between Great Britain, France, and Holland, which was then negotiating by general Stanhope, secretary of state, they were called the three *grand allies;* and a proverbial saying, was current "are you come into the triple alliance?"†

But when Stanhope and Walpole took different sides on the schism between the Whigs, when Townshend was dismissed, and Walpole retired, Pulteney followed his friends example, and resigned his place of secretary at war.

* Letter to Pulteney, p. 29.

† Memoirs of the Life and Conduct of William Pulteney, esq. p. 17.

When Walpole effected a reconciliation between the king and the prince of Wales, and negotiated with Sunderland to form a new administration, in which he and lord Townshend bore the most conspicuous part, then were first sown those seeds of disgust and discontent, which afterwards burst forth.

The causes of this unfortunate misunderstanding, may be traced from the authority of the parties themselves, or that of their particular friends. Pulteney was offended because Walpole had negotiated with the prince of Wales and Sunderland, without communicating the progress to him, although it was told to Mr. Edgecumbe, who indiscreetly gave an account daily to Pulteney.*

* The account of this transaction is thus given by Pulteney himself, several years afterwards, when he was in the height of opposition. "You sent to him one day, as he was going out of town, desiring to speak with him, that, when he came, you told him of there conciliation between the late k— and the then p— of W——; and that a bargain was made for those *Whigs*, who had resigned their employments, to be put in again by degrees. To this the gentleman replied, '*Who pray is it, that hath had authority to make this bargain?*' Your answer was, '*I have done it with the* ministry, *and it was insisted on that nobody but lord Townshend should know of the transaction. Neither lord* Cowper, *the* Speaker, *nor any one else knew it; and therefore we hope you will not take it amiss, that it was kept secret from you.*'—'*Not I*,' said the gentleman, '*but I think it very odd, that any one should presume to take a plenary authority upon himself, to deal for such numbers as were concerned in an affair of this consequence.*'—'*We have not*,' *said you again*, '*had our own interests alone in view. We have bargained for all our friends, and in due time they will be provided for. I am to be*,' said you, '*at the head of the treasury. Lord* Sunderland *had a great desire to retain the disposition of the* secret service money *to himself; but I would by no means consent to that, knowing the chief power of a* minister (and I presume his *profit* also) *depends on the disposition of it.*'

Another cause of disgust was, that Pulteney, who had hitherto invariably proved his attachment to Townshend and Walpole, expected to receive some important employment, whereas he was only offered a peerage, and when he declined it, more than two years elapsed before any farther overture was made; and though Pulteney at length solicited* and obtained the office of cofferer of the household, in the room of the earl of Godolphin, who received a pension of £.5000 per annum to make way for him, he deemed that place far below his just expectations.

Notwithstanding these secret causes of disgust, Pulteney still continued to support the administration. On the communication of the plot in which bishop Atterbury was involved, he moved for an address to congratulate the king on the discovery of so dangerous and unnatural a confederacy. He was chairman of the committee appointed by the house of commons in

You named several others, who were to come into employments; *and* said to *this gentleman*, '*We know, Sir, that you do not value any thing of that kind; so we have obtained a* peerage *for you.* It seems you did not at that time, pretend that the *gentleman* either *expected or insisted on any employment*; and therefore told him that the king had consented to make him a *peer.* To this the *gentleman* replied with some warmth, '*Sir, if ever I should be mean enough to submit to being* sold, *I promise you that you shall never have the* selling *of me. A* peerage *is what, some time or other, I may be glad of accepting, for the sake of my family; but I will never obtain it by any base method, or submit to have it got for me on such terms by you.*"†

* Pulteney's Answer.

† An Answer to one Part of a late infamous Libel, intituled "Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two honourable Patrons," p. 54, 55.

the prosecution; and the report which he drew upon that occasion, is a master-piece of perspicuity and order. But the disdainful manner in which he conceived he had been treated by Walpole, had made too deep an impression on his mind to be eradicated. Finding that he did not possess the full confidence of administration, or disapproving those measures which tended, in his opinion, to raise the power of France on the ruins of the house of Austria, and which sacrificed the interests of Great Britain to those of Hanover, topics on which he afterwards expatiated with great energy and unusual eloquence in parliament, he became more and more estranged from his former friends, and expressed his disapprobation of their measures both in public and private. At length his discontent increasing, he declared his resolution of attacking the minister in parliament.

Walpole perceived his error in disgusting so able an associate, and with a view to prevent his opposition to the payment of the king's debts, hinted to him in the house of commons, that at the removal of either of the secretaries of state, the ministers designed him for the vacant employment. To this proposal Pulteney made no answer, but bowed and smiled, to let him know he understood his meaning.*

Pulteney now came forward as the great opposer of government, and his first exertion on the side of the minority, was on the subject of the civil list. On the 8th of April, 1725, a mes-

* Pulteney's Answer, p. 51.

sage being delivered from the king, by Sir Robert Walpole, praying the commons to assist him in discharging the debts of the civil list, Pulteney moved for an address, that an account should be laid before the house, of all the monies paid for secret service, pensions, bounties, &c. from the 25th of March, 1725. This address being voted, on the following day a motion was made for the house to go into a grand committee, to consider of the king's message; but Mr. Pulteney represented, "The house having ordered an address for several papers relating to the civil list, and other expenses, they ought, in his opinion, to put off the consideration of the message, till those papers were laid before the house; it being natural to inquire into the causes of a disease, before remedies are applied." This being opposed by Walpole, Pulteney replied, "He wondered how so great a debt could be contracted in three years time; but was not surprised some persons were so eager to have the deficiencies of the civil list made good, since they and their friends had so great a share in it; and desired to know, whether this was all that was due, or whether they were to expect another reckoning?" To this it was answered in general, "There was indeed a heavy debt on the civil list, and a great many pensions; but most of these had been granted in king William and queen Anne's reign; some by king Charles the Second and very few by his present majesty. Since the civil list was first settled for his majesty, an expense of above £.90,000 per annum

had happened, which could not then be foreseen, and therefore was left unprovided for. On examining the account of the civil list debts, it would appear, that most of those expenses were either for the necessary support of the dignity of the crown and government, or for the public good. There was indeed a pension of £. 5,000 of another nature, upon the account of the cofferer's place, but which could not well be avoided, for both lord Godolphin, who was in that office, and his father, had so well deserved of the government, that they could not handsomely remove him without a gratuity, and therefore they gave him a pension of £. 5,000 to make room for the worthy gentleman who now enjoys the post."*

Pulteney opposed the motion in every step, until the third reading, when he voted for the payment of the king's debts; and he himself thus accounts for his conduct in this particular: "The *late king* had of himself, or as he was advised by his *ministers*, frequently tried *the gentleman* on this point, and used to persuade him to be for it. He used all the arguments he could; urged to him all the motives he thought could possibly engage him, but all to no purpose. He continued inflexible. At length, the *king* said to him, *it is hard you will not let me be an honest man.* What would you, continued his majesty, *think yourself of one, who refused to pay his butcher, his baker, and other honest tradesmen?*— To this the *gentleman* replied, not a little affected

* Tindal, vol. 19. p. 524, 525.

with his majesty's last argument, *God forbid that he should prevent his majesty from acting such an honest part.* It was not his intention. *What he meant to do was consistent with his duty as a* servant to his majesty, *and agreeable to his duty as a* representative of the people. *He meant only to expose that unnecessary profusion which had been made* in secret service money, pensions, &c. *That the money which should have paid his* honest tradesmen, *was by these means diverted.* His view therefore was, to get a censure of *such practices,* and to prevent their becoming *precedents;* nor had he any design of depriving the *honest creditors* of their just debts; and this was the reason, when he came to the last instance, why *this gentleman* voted for the question; which his majesty understood very well to be agreeable to the promise he had made, however mysterious it might appear to others, and which the gentleman was fully persuaded to be just in itself, and consistent with his duty as *a servant to the crown.*"*

He was soon afterwards dismissed from his place of cofferer of the household, and from this period maintained a systematic opposition to the minister. Pulteney proved himself so formidable, that the ministers again endeavoured to gain him; and about the time of Townshend's resignation, queen Caroline† offered him a peerage, together with the post of secretary of

* Answer to the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two Honourable Patrons, p. 52, 53.

† From the earl of Orford. Life of bishop Newton.

state for foreign affairs, if he would again join his old co-adjutor; but he rejected the offer, and declared his fixed resolution never again to act with Sir Robert Walpole.

The most violent altercations passed in the house of commons between them. Their heat against each other seemed to increase in proportion with their former intimacy, and neither was deficient in sarcastic allusions, violent accusations, and virulent invectives.

On the ninth of February, 1726, Pulteney, made a plausible motion for the appointment of a committee to state the public debts, as they stood on the 25th of December, 1714, with the debts which had been incurred since that time, till the 25th of December 1725, distinguishing how much of the said debts had been provided for, and how much remained unprovided for by parliament. He was seconded by Daniel Pulteney, and supported by Sir Joseph Jekyl. In opposition, Walpole endeavoured to show, that such an inquiry was unreasonable and preposterous, as it might give a dangerous wound to public credit, at this critical juncture, when monied men were already too much alarmed by the appearances of an approaching war. He urged, that in the present posture of affairs, the commons could not better express their love to their country, than by making good their promises and assurances, at the beginning of this session, and by raising, with the greatest dispatch, the necessary supplies, to enable the king to fulfil his engagements, for the welfare of his

subjects, to disappoint the hopes of the enemies to his government, and to repel any insults that might be offered to his crown and dignity. Barnard, member for the city of London, confirmed the assertion of the minister, as to the danger of increasing the alarm of monied men, which had already so much affected public credit, that the stocks had within a few weeks fallen 12 or 14 per cent. Sir Thomas Pengelly having spoken for the motion, Walpole again replied; on which Pulteney declared, "He made this motion with no other view, than to give that *great man* an opportunity to show his integrity to the whole world, which would finish his sublime character." To this Walpole answered, "This compliment would have come with a better grace, and appeared more sincere, when that fine gentleman had himself a share in the management of the public money, than now he was out of place."* Such petulant altercations between these two able speakers, caused much dissatisfaction to those independent members, who wished well to the Hanover line, and who generally supported or opposed all questions from conviction, without being influenced by party motives. The opposition of Pulteney was indeed so apparently dictated by personal resentment, that several who would otherwise have considered the motion just and reasonable, voted against it. Many deemed it ill-timed, and calculated to hurt public credit, and to draw an odium on the house of commons, and accord-

* Chandler.

ingly supported the minister. For these reasons the motion was negatived by 262 against 89.*

Pulteney now placed himself at the head of the discontented Whigs. In conjunction with Bolingbroke, his ancient antagonist, he became the principal supporter of the Craftsman, to which paper he gave many essays, and furnished hints and observations.

At this period, he was greatly courted by the foreign ministers of those powers who were displeased with the measures of the British cabinet, and by none more than by Palm, the Imperial embassador, who caballed with opposition, and endeavoured to overturn the ministry.†

The controversy in 1731, which passed between Pulteney and Walpole's friends and pamphleteers, widened the breach, and rendered it irreparable. The Craftsman was full of invectives against Walpole, and the measures of his administration. In answer to this paper, a pamphlet was published under the title of Sedition and Defamation Displayed; in a letter to the author of the Craftsman, with a motto from Juvenal,

Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris, & carcere dignum,
Si vis esse aliquis.——

It contained a violent, and, according to the spirit of the political writings of the times, a scurrilous abuse of Pulteney and Bolingbroke. The

* Thomas Brodrick to lord chancellor Midleton, February 10, 1726. Midleton Papers. Journals.

† Letter from Palm to the Emperor, December 17, 1726. Correspondence.

character of Pulteney is pourtrayed in the colours of party, in a dedication to the patrons of the Craftsman; and his opposition is wholly attributed to disappointed ambition and personal pique. In answer to this pamphlet, which he supposed to be written by lord Hervey, the great friend and supporter of Sir Robert Walpole, he wrote, "*A proper Reply to a late scurrilous Libel, intituled Sedition and Defamation Displayed, in a Letter to the Author; by Caleb D'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, Esq.*"

In this reply, Mr. Pulteney introduces the character of Sir Robert Walpole, which it must be confessed does not yield, either in scurrility or misrepresentation, to that of Pulteney, given in Sedition and Defamation Displayed.

The author also treated lord Hervey* with

* John lord Hervey, eldest son of John the first earl of Bristol, was born in 1696. He came first into parliament soon after the accession of George the First; was appointed vice-chamberlain to the king in 1730; in 1733 was created a peer; and in 1740 was constituted lord privy seal, from which post he was removed in 1742. He died in 1743. He took a considerable share in the political transactions of the times, and was always a warm advocate on the side of Sir Robert Walpole. Tindal† has observed, "that history ought to repair the injury that party has done to some part of his character," and in fact, it is necessary; for never was man more exposed to ridicule, and lashed with greater severity, than lord Hervey has been exposed and lashed by the satirical pen of Pope. If we may credit the satirist, who has delineated his character under the name of Sporus, he was below all contempt; a man without talents, and without one solitary virtue to compensate for the most ridiculous foibles, and the most abandoned profligacy,

"Let Sporus tremble.—A. What that thing of silk,
"Sporus, that mere white curd of asses milk?
"Satire, or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
"Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?

† Vol. 20. p. 83.

such contempt, and lashed him with such ridicule, in allusion to his effeminate appearance, as a species of half-man and half-woman, which

"P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
"This painted child of dirt, that stinks and sings, &c.
"Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
"As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
"Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
"And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
"Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
"Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad, &c.
"Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
"The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
"Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
"Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
"Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
"A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
"Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
"Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

However I may admire the powers of the satirist, I never could read this passage without disgust and horror; disgust at the indelicacy of the allusions, horror at the malignity of the poet, in laying the foundation of his abuse on the lowest species of satire, personal invective, and what is still worse, on sickness and debility. The poet has so much distorted this portrait, that he has in one instance made the object of his satire, what ought to have been the subject of his praise, the rigid abstinence to which lord Hervey unalterably adhered, from the necessity of preserving his health. Lord Hervey, having felt some attacks of the epilepsy, entered upon, and persisted in a very strict regimen, and thus stopt the progress, and prevented the effects of that dreadful disease. His daily food was a small quantity of asses milk, and a flour biscuit; once a week he indulged himself with eating an apple: he used emetics daily. To this rigid abstemiousness, Pope malignantly alludes, when he says,

"The mere white curd of asses milk."

In short, I agree with the ingenious editor of Pope, "Language cannot afford more glowing or more forcible terms to express the utmost bitterness of contempt. We think we are here reading Milton against Salmasius. The raillery is carried to the very verge of *railing*, some will say *ribaldry*. He has armed his muse with a scalping knife."

May we not ask, with the same author, "Can this be the noble-

Pope, in his character of Sporus, has no less illiberally adopted, that lord Hervey was highly

man whom Midleton, in his dedication to the History of the Life of Tully, has so seriously, and so earnestly praised, for his strong good sense, his consummate politeness, his real patriotism, his rigid temperance, his thorough knowledge and defence of the laws of his country, his accurate skill in history, his unexampled and unremitted diligence in literary pursuits, who added credit to this very history, as Scipio and Lælius did to that of Polybius, by revising and correcting it, and brightening it (as he expresses it), by the strokes of his pencil?" May we not also ask, Is this the nobleman who wrote some of the best political pamphlets which appeared in defence of Walpole's administration? who, though sometimes too florid and pompous, was a frequent and able speaker in parliament, and who, for his political abilities, was raised to the post of lord privy seal? In truth, lord Hervey possessed more than ordinary abilities, and much classical erudition; he was remarkable for his wit, and the number and appositeness of his repartees.

Although his manner and figure were at first acquaintance highly forbidding, yet he seldom failed to render himself, by his lively conversation, which Pope calls,

"The well-whipp'd cream of courtly common sense,"

an entertaining companion to those whom he wished to conciliate. Hence he conquered the extreme prejudice which the king had conceived against him, and from being detested, he became a great favourite. He was particularly agreeable to queen Caroline; as he helped to enliven the uniformity of a court, with sprightly repartees and lively sallies of wit.

His cool and manly conduct in the duel with Pulteney, proved neither want of spirit to resent an injury, or deficiency of courage in the hour of danger; and he compelled his adversary to respect his conduct, though he had satirised his person.

His defects were extreme affectation, bitterness of invective, prodigality of flattery, and great servility to those above him.

Horace, earl of Orford, has given a list of his political writings, in the catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors; and among the Orford Papers, are draughts of several of those pamphlets which were submitted to Sir Robert Walpole. Some are corrected by him, in others, the minister made considerable additions. See Wharton's Pope, vol. 4. pp. 44, 45, 46. Opinions of Sarah duchess of Marlborough—Article, lord Hervey.

offended. A duel ensued,* and Pulteney slightly wounded his antagonist. It afterwards appeared that lord Hervey did not compose this pamphlet; and Pulteney acknowledging his mistake, imputed it, without sufficient authority, to Walpole himself.†

As one great source of the obloquy vented by the ministerial writers against Pulteney, was his junction with Bolingbroke, who, when driven from his country, had espoused the party of the Pretender, a letter by Bolingbroke appeared in the Craftsman of May 22, 1731, with the fictitious name of Old-castle, which, after heaping many charges on the minister, drew the characters of Pulteney and Bolingbroke in a most favourable light, and vindicated them from the imputations of the writers on the side of government.

This letter produced an answer, intituled, "*Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two Honourable Patrons, in his Paper of May 22, 1731.*

Par nobile fratrum;"

In which the two characters commended by the Craftsman, were attacked with increasing asperity, and Pulteney was loaded with personal abuse, by ransacking his private life, prying into his domestic concerns, and family transactions,

* An Account of the duel is given in a letter from Thomas Pelham to earl Waldegrave, January 28, 1731. Correspondence, Period V.

† It was written by Sir William Yonge, secretary at war, as he himself informed the late lord Hardwicke.

by accusing him of acting solely from disappointment and revenge, of being governed by veteran Jacobites, of disrespect to the king, ingratitude to the minister, of sharing the bounties, and adding to the pensions of the crown, and of having obtained the fee-simple of £.9,000 per annum, by the favour, indulgence, and assistance of the minister, whom he had sworn to destroy.* Perhaps he would have acted a more prudent and dignified part, in making no reply to the invective of a party pamphlet; but, as he conceived it to have been written, or at least the materials to have been furnished by the minister, his indignation was roused, and he published an animated defence of himself and his own conduct, a work to which I have frequently alluded, as containing much curious information on the origin and progress of the quarrel between him and Walpole. It is styled, *An answer to One Part of a late infamous Libel, intituled, "Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his Two Honourable Patrons;" in which the character and conduct of Mr. P. is fully vindicated.* Addressing it to Sir Robert Walpole, he says of the pamphlet in which he had been so indecently abused, "There are several pas-
"sages of *secret* history in it, falsely stated
"and misrepresented, which could come from
"nobody but yourself. You might, perhaps,
"employ some of your mercenaries to work
"them up for you; but the ingredients are
"certainly your own."

* P. 37.

In the course of the defence, Mr. Pulteney gives an account of the conversation about making him secretary of state, which he accuses Walpole of having disclosed, and misrepresented. And as Walpole had thrown out to him the bait of the secretaryship, to prevent, if possible, his opposition to the payment of the king's debts, the secret history of that transaction, as far as Pulteney was concerned, is laid before the public. Having gone through that part of his defence, he proceeds, "Since now we are upon the heads of *secret history, which you have opened,* I must explain another point, in this gentleman's defence, concerning the reconciliation between his late majesty and the present king, from whence it will appear, whether you or this gentleman was most greedy of employments, and who discovered the truest zeal for the honour of his present majesty."* That part of his secret conversation which related to George the Second, then prince of Wales, is here subjoined:

"*But pray, Sir* (continued the *gentleman) since you acquaint me with the terms you have made for me, what are those you have made for the* P—, *who hath acted so honourable and steady a part to those with whom he engaged, and who are now in opposition to the court?* To this you answered with a sneer, *Why He is to go to court again, and he will have his* DRUMS *and his* GUARDS, *and such* FINE THINGS. At this the *gentleman* was astonished, and thought proper to press you a

* Answer to an infamous Libel, p. 53.

little further, by asking you, *whether the* P— *was to be left regent again, as he had been when the king went out of England?*—*No,* said you, WHY SHOULD HE? *What!* replied the *gentleman, have you stipulated for a share of royalty for* yourself, *on the king's departure, and is the* P— *to live like a* private subject, *of no consequence in the kingdom?*—The *gentleman* avers upon his *honour,* that your answer was this: HE DOES NOT DESERVE IT.—WE HAVE DONE TOO MUCH FOR HIM; AND IF IT WAS TO BE DONE AGAIN, WE WOULD NOT DO SO MUCH.—Upon this, the *gentleman* went directly to the P— (with whom he then had some credit) and humbly represented upon what terms the reconciliation was founded. He told him that he was sold to his *father's ministers,* by *persons* who considered nothing but *themselves* and their own interest, and were in haste to make their fortunes. This was thought by him to have had some weight, at that time, with the P—, though the gentleman did not think it proper to tell him the whole that had passed, and relate what you said of him in so ungrateful a manner." *

The disclosure of this secret conversation, and of the contemptuous expressions which Walpole is said to have uttered against the king, when prince of Wales, instead of irritating him against the minister, only raised his resentment higher against Pulteney. Franklin, the printer of the pamphlet, was arrested; Pulteney's name was struck out of the list of privy counsellors, and

* Answer to an infamous Libel, p. 55, 56.

he was put out of all commissions of the peace,* measures which tended to render the breach irreparable. Such was indeed the bitterness of party, and the animosity against the minister, that Pulteney does not hesitate to declare, that "the opposition had come to a determined resolution, not to listen to any treaty whatsoever, or from whomsoever it may come, in *which the first and principal condition should not be to deliver him up to the justice of the country.*"†

When animosity had risen to such a height on both sides, no compromise could be effected. Pulteney continued invariably to oppose the measures of Walpole, and was principally instrumental in driving him from the helm. But although in the zeal of party, and in the warmth of debate, these two great men reviled each other with so much acrimony; yet even in the house of commons, they frequently conversed on the most amicable terms; and as Pulteney, though in opposition, always sat on the treasury bench, these opportunities were very frequent. Dr. Pearce, bishop of Rochester, has recorded an anecdote of their easy manner of conversing, which reflects honour on both parties.

"Mr. Pulteney sitting upon the same bench with Sir Robert Walpole in the house of commons, said, 'Sir Robert, I have a favour to ask of you.' 'O my good friend Pulteney,' said Sir Robert, 'what favour can you have to ask of me?' 'It is,' said Mr. Pulteney, 'that Dr. Pearce

* Tindal, v. 20. p. 104.

† Mr. Pulteney's Answer, p. 47.

may not suffer in his preferment for being my friend.' 'I promise you,' returned Sir Robert, 'that he shall not.' 'Why then I hope,' said Mr. Pulteney, 'that you will give him the deanery of Wells.' 'No,' replied Sir Robert, 'I cannot promise you that for him, for it is already promised.'"

Sir Robert having afterwards obtained for him the deanery of Winchester, his friend Mr. Pulteney, congratulating him on his promotion, said to him, "Dr. Pearce, though you may think that others besides Sir Robert have contributed to get you that dignity, yet you may depend upon it, that he is all in all, and that you owe it entirely to his good-will towards you; and therefore, as I am now so engaged in opposition to him, it may happen, that some who are of *our* party may, if there should be any opposition for members of parliament at Winchester, prevail upon me to act there in assistance of some friend of our's; and Sir Robert, at the same time, may ask your assistance in the election, for a friend of his own, against one whom we recommend. I tell you, therefore, beforehand, that if you comply with my request, rather than Sir Robert's, to whom you are so much obliged, I shall have the worse opinion of you. Could any thing be more generous to the dean as a friend, or to Sir Robert, to whom in other respects he was a declared opponent?"*

* Life of Pearce.

CHAPTER 40.

1733.

Walpole proposes to take Half a Million from the Sinking Fund, for the Service of the current Year—Encroachments from its first Establishment to this Motion—Opposition to the Bill—Substance of the Reasons on both Sides—It passes the House—Subsequent Encroachments—Beneficial Consequences which would have been derived from appropriating the Produce to the Liquidation of the Debt—Ill Consequences of alienating it—Motives which induced the Minister to take that Method of raising Supplies.

THE last account which I had occasion to give of the parliamentary proceedings and domestic events, was carried down only to May 1730. The hopes of a schism amongst the Whigs, and a division of the ministers, gave energy to the leaders of opposition; but the ill success of their exertions, and the uninterrupted prosperity of the country, during the two succeeding years, render the domestic history barren of events, and afford little worthy of mention in the life of the minister. The sixth session of the third septennial parliament, which opened on the 17th of January 1733, is, however, distinguished by two measures of Sir Robert Walpole; of which the first, to take half a million from the sinking fund, though contrary to the national interest,

was carried by a large majority; and the second, which was the Excise scheme, though evidently calculated for the advantage of the country, met with violent opposition, and was relinquished by the minister.

This chapter will be confined to the discussion of the important question concerning the alienation of the sinking fund; a measure which has incurred the bitter censure of most writers who have speculated on the subject of finance, and which seems to be the greatest blot in the administration of the minister. In this disquisition, I shall state the deviations from, and encroachments on the sinking fund, until it was finally perverted from its original use, and instead of being employed in the liquidation of the national debt, became a fund for the current service of the year. I shall likewise show the beneficial consequences which would have resulted from following the original design; and consider the motives which induced the minister to counteract his own great establishment, and entail a debt on the nation, which otherwise might have been considerably diminished.

When the house of commons passed an act establishing a fund for applying the surplusses of duties and revenues to the liquidation of the national debt, called in subsequent acts the sinking fund, the words to appropriate them to that purpose were as strong as could be found, *to and for none other use, intent, or purpose whatsoever.*

During the whole reign of George the First,

it was invariably appropriated to its original purposes, and rather than encroach upon it, money was borrowed upon new taxes, when the supplies in general might have been raised, by dedicating the surplusses of the old taxes to the current services of the year.* Even in the infancy of the establishment, when its operations were necessarily very confined, great advantages were derived even from a small surplus. The national interest was immediately reduced from 6 to 5 per cent.; £.750,000 in old exchequer bills were paid off in 1719; and it appeared, by the report of the house of commons, that from 1717 to 1728, the sinking fund had discharged £.2,698,416, and its average amount was £.1,200,000.

It no sooner attained this progressive power, than its operations were suspended. Between 1727 and 1733, several encroachments were made, either by alienating the taxes which yielded the surplusses, or by charging the interest of several loans, upon the surplusses appropriated to the payment of the debt. But although this measure was in effect the same as depriving it of gross sums; yet as these encroachments were not direct invasions of the fund, they seem to have met with little opposition.

However, in 1733, an open attack was made. Half a million being voted for the service of the ensuing year, the minister proposed to take that sum from the sinking fund, and by that means

* Price's Appeal on the National Debt. Sinclair, p. 106.

to continue the land tax at one shilling in the pound; adding, that should this motion be objected to, he should move for a land tax of two shillings in the pound, there being no other means of providing for the current expenses.

This motion justly occasioned a long and violent debate, and the strength of the argument undoubtedly lay on the side of opposition. The whole substance of the reasons, which the minister could urge in defending this violation of his own principles was, the necessity of giving ease to the landed interest, and the dread of the public creditors lest their debts should be discharged. On this occasion he advanced the remarkable position, that the situation of the country, and the case of the public creditors were altered so much since the establishment of the sinking fund, that the competition among them was not who should be the first, but who should be the last to be paid; an assertion, which none of the opposition ventured to contradict, and therefore may be considered as true. He also added, that the sinking fund, though established for the payment of the debts, was still subject to the disposal of parliament; and whenever it appeared, that it could be more properly and beneficially applied to some other use, the legislature had a power, and ought to dispose of it in that manner.

On the other side, the opposition argued, that the sacred deposit for discharging the debts and abolishing the taxes, ought not to be applied to any use, except in cases of extreme necessity,

which were not now apparent; that assenting to the motion was in fact robbing posterity of £.500,000, and the progressive interest of that sum, for a trifling ease to themselves. They reminded him of his inconsistency, in destroying his own darling project, and undermining the boasted monument of his own glory; and Sir John Barnard emphatically urged, "the author of such an expedient must expect the curses of posterity."

These arguments, however, did not affect the decision of the commons. The influence of the minister, aided by the co-operation of the landed, monied, and popular interests, triumphed over opposition; and the motion was carried by a majority of 110 voices; 245 against 135.

The practice of alienating the sinking fund having been once sanctioned by parliament, was continued without intermission. In 1734, £.1,200,000, or the whole produce of the year, was taken from it; in 1735 and 1736, it was anticipated and mortgaged. "Thus expired," observes Dr. Price, perhaps with more enthusiasm than truth, "after an existence of a few years, the sinking fund; that sacred blessing (as it was once thought) and the nation's only hope. Could it have escaped, it would long before this time have eased Britain of all its debts, and left it safe and happy."

In regard to the beneficial consequences which must have resulted from the due administration of the sinking fund, many words are not wanting to prove that point. Without estimating the

advantages as highly as the opponents of the minister, or Dr. Price, it may fairly be inferred, from the statement of Walpole himself, that had the produce been applied to that purpose, from its first establishment in 1716 to 1739, the year in which the war with Spain commenced, more than 20 millions of the national debt might have been easily paid off, whereas only £.7,190,740 were discharged.*

The ill consequences of alienating the sinking fund are so evident, that it is not my intention to justify Sir Robert Walpole. On the contrary, he deserves and has sufficiently incurred the censure of posterity. But while we blame this conduct in its full latitude, let us not follow the example of those speculative writers, who do not sufficiently weigh existing circumstances, who neglect to consider the temper of the times and the situation of the country, and who judge of the measures adopted by government in 1733, from those which have been pursued in subsequent times. In justice to the memory of a minister, who seems to have sacrificed every object for the preservation of internal tran-

* The opposition computed, but on very erroneous calculations, that at Christmas 1733, £.25,000,000 might have been paid off more than had been discharged, and Dr. Price observes, "Had it, from the year 1732, been allowed to increase beyond this (except from the interest of debts paid by it), and been applied for the first twenty-five years to the payment of debts, bearing 4 per cent. interest, and afterwards to the payment of debts bearing 3 per cent., it would (in the present year 1781) have completed the redemption of more than one hundred and sixty millions of debt, leaving the public, during this whole period, in possession of all the surplusses which have arisen in the revenue beyond £.1,212,000, except those produced by redemptions." Price on Annuities, vol. 1, p. 220.

quillity and external peace, let us consider the motives which induced him to propose the alienation of the sinking fund, which cannot be better illustrated than in the words of a very judicious writer on finance.

"These steps of administration I neither censure nor approve. I must suppose every statesman to have good reasons for doing what he does, unless I can discover that his motives are bad. May not the landed interest, who composed the parliament, have insisted upon such a diminution of their load? May not the proprietors of the public debts have insisted, on their side, that no money out of the sinking fund should be thrown into their hands, while the bank was making loans upon the land and malt duties at 3 per cent.? Might not the people have been averse to an augmentation of taxes? When three such considerable interests concur in a scheme, which in its ultimate, though distant consequences, must end in the notable prejudice of perpetuating the debts, although opportunities offer to diminish them, what can government do? They must submit; and, which is worse, they cannot well avow their reasons.

"Such combinations must occur, and frequently too, in every state loaded with debts, where the body of the people, the landlords, and the creditors, find an advantage in the non-payment of the national debt. For this reason, I imagine, the best way to obviate the bad consequences of so strong an influence in parliament, would be, to appropriate the amount of all sinking funds in such a manner, as to put it out

of a nation's power to misapply them, and by this means force them either to retrench their extraordinary expenses, or to impose taxes for defraying them."*

These observations are perfectly just, and consonant to the spirit and temper of the times; nor did any measure of Walpole's administration more conciliate the favour of the landholders, monied men, and people, than the alienation of the sinking fund, so justly deprecated by posterity, yet so much applauded by his contemporaries.

For a long period after the accession of George the First, the greater part of the landed interest uniformly opposed government. With a view to ingratiate the new family with these persons, who formed a large party in the house of commons, the minister lowered the land tax to three and then to two shillings in the pound. This measure effectually galled opposition, brought over many friends to government; and it was truly said by Henry Pelham, in the house of commons, "Gentlemen may talk as they please of what was done in last session of parliament; but I can say, that in all places were I have since been, I have had the pleasure of receiving the thanks of the people, for the ease then given to the landed interest; and whatever gloss may now be put upon that affair, yet I know that some gentlemen, who appeared against it, were heard to say at the time that affair was mentioned, it will please the country too much, and therefore we must endeavour to render it abortive. I will,

* Steuart's Political Œconomy, vol. 2. p. 391.

indeed, do the gentlemen the justice to believe that they then spoke as they thought; and they then did what they could to prevent the success of a design, by which his majesty's administration has gained the favour and the esteem of the generality of the landholders in England."*

The monied men were no less satisfied. The minister himself informs us of their principles: "The sinking fund," he says, "was now grown to a great maturity, produced annually about £.1,200,000, and became almost a terror to all the individual proprietors of the public debts. The high state of credit, the low rate of interest, and the advanced price of the stocks and funds *above par*, made the great monied companies, and all their proprietors, apprehend nothing more than being obliged to receive their principals too fast; and it became almost the universal consent of mankind, that a million a year was as much as the creditors of the public could bear to receive, in discharge of part of their principal."†

As to the people at large, it is always more agreeable to them to defray the current expenses by alienating a sinking fund, than by imposing a new tax. Every tax is felt, soon occasions murmurs, and meets with some opposition. In proportion as the taxes are multiplied, two difficulties arise; the people more loudly complain of every new impost, and it becomes more difficult to find out fresh subjects

* Chandler, vol. 7. p. 295.

† Some Considerations on the Public Funds, p. 56.

of taxation, or to augment the old levies. But a temporary suspension in the payment of the debt is not felt, and occasions neither murmur nor complaint. To borrow therefore from the sinking fund is always an obvious expedient for raising supplies,* and has never been known to create a national ferment.

The minister must have been more than man, had he preferred the blessings of posterity to the curses of his own age, or sacrificed present ease to the dread of remote evils.

Yet, after making due allowance to the temper of the times, and the situation of parties, the measure itself cannot be justified; the warmest admirers of the minister must allow, that it is a dark speck in his financial administration.

The sagacious mind of Walpole, might have discovered some method of satisfying the public creditors, while he paid them off. He might have conciliated present advantage with the benefit of posterity, combined his own interest with that of the people, and by confining himself to a partial alienation, have rendered it a temporary, and not a permanent evil.†

* Smith, Wealth of Nations, vol. 3. p. 418.

† For the history and alienation of the sinking fund have been consulted, An Inquiry into the Conduct of our Domestic Affairs from the year 1721 to 1734: Supposed to be written by Mr. Pulteney, page 33 to 55. An Answer to that pamphlet, intituled, Some Considerations concerning the Publick Funds, written by Sir Robert Walpole, page 8 to 81. Price on Annuities, vol. 1. p. 185 to 223. Sinclair on the Revenue, vol. 1. p. 99 to 101. Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. 3. p. 410. Steuart's Political Œconomy, vol. 2.

CHAPTER 41.

1733.

Origin and Progress of the Excise—Object of Walpole's Scheme—Arts of Opposition—Parliamentary Proceedings—Report of the Committee—Speech of Walpole—Bill abandoned—Views and Conduct of Opposition—Influence of Walpole—Removals and Promotions—Prorogation of Parliament.

I AM now arrived at that important period in the life of Sir Robert Walpole, which relates to what is usually called the EXCISE SCHEME, or in other words, the plan for subjecting the duties on wine and tobacco to the laws of excise; a measure which raised a great ferment in the nation, because it was perverted by the malignant spirit of party, and was not thoroughly understood by sober and impartial persons; but which reason, and the disinterested voice of posterity have sanctioned and justified.

On this subject, a judicious writer,* who well understood the principles of commerce, has observed, "Without entering into a defence of all parts of his conduct, I am persuaded that impartial posterity will do him the justice to acknowledge, that if ever a statesman deserved well of the British nation, Sir Robert Walpole

* Tucker's Elements of Commerce and Theory of Taxes, p. 148, a book printed but not published.

was the man. Indeed, the only true way of discovering, whether we are advancing or retreating in our political and commercial capacity is, to compare the past with the present, and to examine whether we have the same quantity of pernicious taxes, and monopolizing patents, as we had formerly. If we have not, it is our business to be thankful for the deliverance we have received, and to unite our endeavours to be freed from the remainder. This is real patriotism and public spirit.

"One of the great merits of Sir Robert Walpole, and in which perhaps no minister ever approached him, was that of simplifying the taxes, abolishing the numerous petty complicated imposts, which checked commerce and vexed the fair trader, and substituting in their stead more equal and simple.

"But to omit matters of lesser note, the wisest proposal to relieve the nation was the Excise Scheme, by means of which the whole island would have been one general FREE PORT, and a *magazine* and *common storehouse* for all nations.

"It was not indeed a perfect scheme at its first appearance; but the foundation was good, and a few alterations would have rendered it a most useful institution for the purposes of national commerce. But the business of those times was, not to alter, mend, or improve, but to oppose, and to raise a ferment. But even in its most imperfect state it would have defeated the views of monopolists, and have proved of great

national advantage. If the bill had been so worded as to be only *permissive* not *compulsory*, every man in this kingdom would have made the Excise scheme his own choice, that is, he would have preferred the method of putting his goods in a warehouse, and paying the duties as he wanted them, rather than paying the duties all at once at the custom house. As a proof of this, let it be observed, that the very men who made the loudest clamour against the Excise scheme, in a few years petitioned for a much worse, the present law relating to tobacco; which is allowed on all hands to be an excise scheme in effect, and to have inconveniences, which the Excise scheme had not. But to give some salvo to the matter, the word *Permit* is changed to that of *Certificate.*"*

Either the Excise scheme was not such as it is here explained, or the opposition to it was founded on principles of error, misrepresentation and party. Let me then be permitted to consider by what means the nation in general was induced to raise such a decided resistance to the bill, and to make as public and as loud rejoicings when it was relinquished, as upon the most glorious national victory ever gained over our enemies in times of the greatest danger.

In attempting to develope these causes, it may be expedient to trace the history of the Excise from its first introduction into England, until the opening of Walpole's scheme.

* Tucker, Theory of Laws, p. 149.

The first attempt to introduce it was made in 1626, by a commission under the great seal, issued to thirty-three lords, and others of the privy council, but the parliament having remonstrated, it was judged by both houses contrary to law, and the commission accordingly cancelled by the king.* So odious was the very name, that if we may credit Howel, Sir Dudley Carleton, then secretary of state, having only named it in the house of commons, with a view to show the happiness which the people of England enjoyed above other nations, in being exempted from that imposition, was suddenly interrupted, called to the bar, and nearly sent to the Tower.*

During the civil wars in 1641, parliament ventured to impose an Excise on beer, ale, cyder, and perry; but although they pleaded absolute necessity in excuse for this expedient, and continued it only from month to month; yet the execution of it raised riots in London. The populace burnt down the Excise house in Smithfield, and nothing but a standing army, adds the Craftsman, would have forced it upon the people at that time, when they were greatly disaffected to the king, and favourable to the parliament.‡

Although Charles the First, in one of his declarations, charged parliament with imposing insupportable taxes, and odious excises upon their fellow subjects; yet he was afterwards under the necessity of resorting to the same expedient. Accordingly, excises were laid on by

* Craftsman, No. 333. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

both parties, though both declared that they should be continued only till the end of the war, and then abolished.

Soon afterwards the parliament imposed it on sugar, butcher's meat, and on so many other commodities, that it might justly be called general, in pursuance of a plan, laid down by Pymm, in a letter to Sir John Hotham; "That they had proceeded to the Excise in many particulars, and intended to go farther; but that it would be necessary to use the people to it by little and little."*

At the restoration, the Excise was abolished on all articles of consumption, except beer and ale, cyder and perry, which produced a clear revenue, according to Davenant, of £.666,383. These duties were divided into two equal portions; the one called the hereditary Excise, because granted to the crown for ever, in recompence for the court of wards, purveyance, and levies abolished by act of parliament; the other the temporary Excise, because granted only for the life of the king.

On the accession of James the Second, parliament not only renewed the temporary Excise for his life, but also increased it by additional duties on wines, vinegar, tobacco, and sugar, which however were suffered to expire.

The immediate effects of the revolution were, to diminish the Excises, supposed to be of a nature peculiarly obnoxious to the spirit and

* Craftsman, No. 333. 1773. Appendix. Blackstone, B. 1. C. 8. Clarendon.

principles of the constitution. But from the necessity of raising money to defend our religion and liberties, even this species of imposition was adopted. An Excise on salt, on the distillery, and on malt, since known by the name of the malt tax, was then first introduced; an additional Excise on beer produced alone £450,000; and the sums raised by those duties, during the reign of William amounted to £.13,649,328, or nearly a million per annum.

But so great were the necessities which the war on the Spanish succession entailed on the nation, under the reign of queen Anne, that the aversion to the Excise did not prevent additional duties on several articles of consumption, and it produced in her reign £.20,859,311, or nearly £.1,738,275 per annum.

During the whole reign of George the First, no Excise was laid on, except a small duty on wrought plate, under the administration of Sunderland. But the internal tranquillity of the country, and the exemption from foreign war, increasing the produce of the taxes, the Excise yielded in 13 years, £.30,421,451, or about £.2,340,000 per annum. Its unpopularity, however, was not diminished by long usage, and the laws for the collection were necessarily so severe, and so often exercised in preventing frauds and punishing smugglers, that they were considered by many persons as encroaching on private property and personal liberty.

Such were the prejudices conceived against the Excise, that the principal writers on finance,

government, and trade, from the revolution to the period under consideration, almost uniformly condemn it; and a plausible notion prevailed, that as the real income of every country originates from the land, all taxes should be at once imposed on landed property.*

Even Davenant, who well understood the nature of taxes in general, and has so ably written on public credit, was deceived in this particular. Because at that time the Excise had the effect of sinking the price of the subject excised instead of raising the price of the produce,† he concluded that all Excises fall ultimately upon the land, and proposed, as more equitable, the poll tax and land tax.

The authority of Locke also contributed to spread the same notion, and his opinion against the establishment of the Excise, was quoted with due effect by the Craftsman. That great philosopher, whose writings tended so much to expand and enlighten the human mind, had without due consideration asserted, that all impositions on articles of consumption fell ultimately upon land. The natural consequence, therefore, of that position was, that additional duties on wine and tobacco, could not ultimately ease the landholder, and therefore could not fulfil the intention held forth to the country

* For a refutation of this system, see Smith's Wealth of Nations. Neckar on Finances, vol. 1. c. 6. Steuart's Political Economy. Sinclair, vol. 2. p. 113.

† The excise upon malt had the effect of lowering the price of barley, instead of raising the value of beer. Steuart's Political Economy, vol. 2. p. 362.

gentlemen, as an argument in favour of the bill.

This system, though exploded * by a more intelligent age, had a surprising influence on all ranks and descriptions of men at that time, when the principles of commerce and taxation were little understood, and less followed. The opposition laid great stress on this argument; and in conformity to the existing opinion, Sir William Wyndham did not scruple to declare it, "as demonstrable as any proposition in Euclid, that if we actually paid a land tax of ten shillings in the pound, without paying any other excises or duties, our liberties would be much more secure, and every landed gentleman might live at least in as much plenty, and might make a better provision for his family, than under the present mode of taxation."

On the contrary, the sagacity of Walpole led him to perceive, that a tax on landed property

* Sir John Sinclair has, in a few words, ably shown the absurdity of imposing all the taxes on land. "Were it admitted, though it can hardly be seriously maintained in a commercial country, that the whole income of the nation arose from the cultivation of the soil, yet still, by imposing duties on consumptions, a greater revenue may be raised, than by a direct tax on land. By the latter method you only tax the proprietor of the soil, who has only a certain portion of the produce, and a considerable part of which is necessarily taken from him for the subsistence of others. Whereas by the former method, the public shares in the profits of those individuals who derive any benefit from the soil by any means, whether directly or indirectly. And hence, whilst the tax of four shillings in the pound on land is severely felt by many individuals in England, though it yields only two millions per annum, a tax on barley, in all its various stages of consumption, to the amount of above three millions and a half, is levied without murmur." Sinclair on the Revenue, vol. 2. p. 113.

was a greater burthen to the subject than taxes on articles of consumption. He was fully aware, that the Excise laws obstruct the operations of smugglers more effectually than the laws of the customs; that the method of levying taxes in use, was more burthensome upon trade, and more expensive to the merchants, than the raising of them by Excise, and that it would be more beneficial to commerce, and would considerably increase the revenue, if all, or the greater part of the customs were converted into excises. But as he well knew the aversion which the nation entertained against the Excise, and as he was unwilling to deviate from his own great principle of government, *not to rouse things which are at rest*, he proposed gradually to introduce his plan by abolishing the land tax, and substituting other methods, until he could venture to come forwards with the proposal of his great scheme for extending the Excise.

With this view he made an alteration in the duties on coffee, tea, and chocolate, by abolishing the import duties, and subjecting them to inland duties, and to the same mode of collection as is practised in the Excise. But as he still suffered them to be levied as customs, and prudently omitted to mention the word Excise, this amendment met with no opposition, and increased the duties on tea, coffee, and chocolate about £.120,000 a year.*

* The difference between the customs and excise is thus defined by Sir Robert Walpole himself: "The duties known by the name of customs are certain rates imposed by authority of parliament, upon all commodities imported from abroad, which rates are either

For the same purpose he proposed the revival of the salt duty, which had been abolished in 1729, because he conceived, that a revival of Excise duties on commodities formerly subjected to that mode of collection, would not be regarded with so jealous an eye, as a new impost in the same line.

But though he thus endeavoured to conceal his intended purpose, yet the opposition penetrated his scheme. In the debate which took place on that subject, they first threw down the gauntlet, and dwelt with unabated energy on the apprehensions of a general Excise, as the war-whoop to spread an alarm throughout the country, and as the death-warrant of national liberty. It was then that, provoked by the petulance of his adversaries, and entertaining too great a contempt of their arguments, with more spirit than judgment, and with more attention to the dictates of truth, than to the temper of the times, he anticipated the intended mention of his extensive views, and laid down the great plan before it was sufficiently matured, and before the nation was able to consider and appreciate its excellence. He unequivocally declared, that the land tax was the most unequal, most grievous, and the most oppressive tax ever

to be paid by the importer, upon the entry at importation, with different allowances and discounts for prompt payment, or they must be secured by bond, payable in a certain number of months, and, as well as the duties paid down, are repaid and drawn back again upon re-exportation, and the bonds given, vacated and discharged; or in short, customs are duties paid by the merchant, upon *importation*: Excises, duties payable by the retail trader upon consumption." Orford Papers.

known in this country; a tax not to be raised but in times of the greatest necessity; and in answer to those who opposed the revival of the salt duties, because it was partly levied under the Excise, he ventured to declare, that an Excise is only a word for a tax levied in a different manner. He added, "If it be found by experience, that the present method of raising our taxes is more burthensome upon our trade, and more inconvenient and expensive than the Excise, I see no manner of reason why we should be frightened by these two words, 'General Excise,' from changing the method of collecting the taxes we now pay, and choosing that which is most convenient for the trading part of the nation."*

This manly avowal of his sentiments in favour of the Excise laws, was naturally deemed by opposition the prelude to his adoption of them, and magnified into a scheme for a general Excise on all the necessaries of life.

Aware of having prematurely advanced notions which the age could not comprehend, a pamphlet was published on this subject, under his auspices, intituled, "*Some general Considerations concerning the Alteration and Improvement of the Revenues;*" in which an attempt was made to inform the people, that the scheme was founded on the first principles of commerce and taxation, and in no degree derogatory from the liberties of the subject.

But in this progressive plan he was baffled by

* Chandler.

opposition, who employed against him all the powers of wit and eloquence, which they possessed in so abundant a degree; and it must be confessed the scheme was not defended with equal energy and spirit. The nation took the alarm; and before the scheme was understood, even before it was formally proposed, the writers in opposition, more particularly the Craftsman, delineated such a hideous picture of the EXCISE, as raised among the people the most terrible apprehensions. These weekly essays, collected and published under the title of "*Arguments against Excises*," contributed to pervert the judgment, and excite the rage of the deluded multitude. Against the united shafts of sophistry, wit, and ridicule, adapted to the prejudices and conceptions of the people, the weapons of sober truth and reason had no effect.

The grand object of the bill was to give ease to the landed interest, by the total abolition of the land tax; to prevent frauds; to decrease smuggling; to augment the revenue; to simplify the taxes, and facilitate the collection of them at the least possible expense.

The great outlines of the plan were, to convert the customs into duties of Excise, and to meliorate the laws of the Excise in such a manner, as to obviate their abuses or oppressions.

Such were the object and general outlines of the plan. The specific propositions were, to divide the commodities into taxed, and not

taxed, and to confine the taxed commodities to a few articles of general consumption. To comprehend among the untaxed commodities, the principal necessaries of life, and all the raw materials of manufacture. The free importation of the necessaries of life, by rendering those necessaries cheaper, would reduce the price of labour. The reduction of the price of labour would diminish the price of home manufactures, and increase thereby the demand in all foreign markets, by underselling those of other nations. The free importation of raw materials would reduce the price of manufactures, and the cheapness of the goods would secure both the home consumption, and a great command in the foreign markets; and it was this regulation which induced Tucker to say, that by means of this scheme the whole island would become *one general* FREE PORT.

So much for the commodities untaxed. But even the trade of the taxed commodities would be augmented, and both the foreign and home trade enjoy considerable advantages. The foreign trade would be benefited, because the commodities delivered out of the warehouse for exportation, being exempted from all imposts, would be perfectly free; and the carrying trade, under these regulations, would be highly increased. The home trade would be benefited, because the importer, not being obliged to advance the duty on the commodities delivered for internal consumption, until he disposed of his goods, would

afford to sell them cheaper, than if he had been obliged to advance the duty at the moment of importation.

Such, according to the opinion of a very judicious writer,* was the object of the famous Excise scheme.

To prepare its introduction, a committee had been appointed to inspect into the frauds and abuses committed in the customs; and on the 7th of June, 1732, Sir John Cope, the chairman, presented the report to the house. Though it was of infinite importance, and of so great length as to comprise, when printed, 103 pages in folio; yet the committee sensible that they had not fully explored all the recesses of fraud, and had left great part of their task unaccomplished, accompanied this elaborate document with an apology for its imperfections, in which they observed, that the shortness of the session would not allow them to make it so complete as they might otherwise have done; and that the number and intricacy of the various frauds, rendered a thorough disquisition almost impracticable.

In this report they adverted to the frauds committed by traders in tobacco, tea, brandy, and wine, and in the course of it displayed scenes of dishonesty, perjury, informing, violence, and even murder, which would appear to sanction almost any measure, however violent, to remove a stigma so horrible from the mercantile body, and from the fiscal laws of the country.

* Smith's Wealth of Nations, vol. 3. p. 358.

It was proved by undeniable evidence, that by perjury, forgery, and the most impudent collusion, in the article of tobacco, the revenue was frequently defrauded to the amount of one third of the duties, and that in many cases, an allowance had been dishonestly obtained, as a drawback on re-exportation, exceeding the sum originally received by government, which in the port of London alone, sustained by these means a loss of £.100,000 per annum. The smuggling of tea and brandy was conducted so openly and so audaciously, that since Christmas 1723, a period of only nine years, the number of custom house officers beaten and abused, amounted to 250; and six had been murdered: 251,320 pounds weight of tea, and 652,924 gallons of brandy had been seized and condemned; and upwards of 2,000 persons prosecuted: 229 boats and other vessels had been condemned, 185 of which had been burnt, and the remainder retained for the service of the crown. The smuggling of wine was managed with so much art, or the connivance of the revenue officers so effectually secured, that within the period of nine years, only 2,208 hogsheads had been condemned, though it appeared, from depositions on oath, that in the space of two years, 4,738 hogsheads had been run in Hampshire, Dorsetshire, and Devonshire only, and on inquiry, 30 officers were dismissed, and informations entered against 400 persons; 38 were committed to gaol, 118 admitted evidence, and 45 had compounded.

Notwithstanding the facts contained in this

Report, and the endeavours used to enlighten the public mind, the opposition had been so assiduous and successful in the dissemination of slander and suspicion, that they looked forward with impatience to the introduction of the minister's plan, as the certain means of triumph to them, and of disgrace to him. Indeed, considering the nature of the contest, they could hardly be thought too sanguine in their expectations of the event. The members of any administration proposing measures for giving additional strength to government, for restraining the turbulent, or suppressing fraud, are exposed to every species of calumny, and assailable by all the weapons of eloquence, wit, ridicule, personality, and misrepresentation; while in their defence, they are restricted to the use of those topics, which make an impression only by the operation of time and experience. The majesty of argumentative eloquence, and the glare of wit, are undervalued, when eloquence is supposed to be biassed by interest, and wit is divested of personality and caustic satire, which alone can make it pleasing to the multitude.

The writers in the interest of opposition had sounded the trumpet of alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other. They asserted that the minister's plan would not tend to prevent fraud, decrease smuggling, or augment the revenue; but to destroy the very being of parliament, undermine the constitution, render the king absolute, and subject the houses, goods, and dealings of the subject, to a state inquisi-

tion. They represented the Excise as a monster feeding on its own vitals; and compared it to the Trojan horse, which contained an army in its belly.

Having by these means agitated the public mind to a frenzy of opposition, the enemies of the minister were anxious to follow their advantage, and to urge him to bring forward his plan before the people had leisure for sober reflection. London, and many places in the country, had given express instructions to their representatives, to oppose the Excise scheme in all its forms, and to use every method to impede its progress; and the members were so anxious to show that they had not been unmindful of these dictates, that they seized every opportunity, long before the measure was officially announced to the house, of adding to the impressions of horror already entertained against it.

On opening the session, the king, in his speech from the throne, recommended to the house, *that in all their deliberations, as well upon raising the annual supplies, as the distribution of the public revenues, they should pursue such measures as would most conduce to the present and future ease of their constituents.* In another part of his speech, he admonished them *to avoid unreasonable heats and animosities, and not suffer themselves to be diverted by any specious pretences, from steadfastly pursuing the true interest of the country.*

On the motion for the address, Sir John Barnard made these observations. "The honour-

"able gentleman who moved the address, pro-
"poses for us to say, *That we will raise the*
"*supplies in such manner, as will most conduce to*
"*the present and future ease of the subject.* Now,
"there seems to be a great jealousy without
"doors, as if something were intended to be
"done in this session of parliament, that may
"be destructive to our liberties, and detrimental
"to our trade. From whence this jealousy hath
"arisen, I do not know; but it is certain that
"there is such a jealousy among all sorts of
"people, and in all corners of the nation; and
"therefore, we ought to take the first oppor-
"tunity to quiet the minds of the people, and
"to assure them that they may depend upon
"the honour and integrity of the members of
"this house; and that we will never consent to
"any thing that may have the least appearance
"of being destructive to their liberties, or detri-
"mental to their trade; for which reason, I
"move that these words, *and such as shall be*
"*consistent with the trade, interest, and liberty of*
"*the nation*, may be added as an amendment."

In support of this amendment, Shippen observed, "It is certain there are great fears,
"jealousies, and suspicions without doors, that
"something is to be attempted in this session
"of parliament, which is generally thought to
"be destructive to the liberties and to the trade
"of this nation. There is at present a most
"remarkable and general spirit among the
"people for protecting and defending their
"liberties and their trade, in opposition to

"those attempts which they expect are to be "made against both. From all quarters we "hear of meetings and resolutions for that pur- "pose; and this spirit is so general, that it "cannot be ascribed to any one set of men. "They cannot be branded with the name of "Jacobites or republicans; no; the whole peo- "ple of England seem to be united in this spirit "of jealousy and opposition."

Walpole, in reply, disclaimed any knowledge of a design to injure the trade of the nation, and said, "If the people are hampered or injured in "their trade, they must feel it, and they will "feel it before they begin to complain. In such "case it is the duty of this house, not only to "hear their complaints, but, if possible, to de- "vise a remedy. But the people may be taught "to complain; they may be made to feel ima- "ginary ills, and by such practices they are "often induced to make complaints before they "feel any uneasiness." He did not, however, oppose the amendment, and it was carried.

This was only a prelude to several other skirmishes which took place before the grand attack. In the debate of the 14th of February, on the subject of preventing the importation of foreign sugar, rum, &c. into the plantations in America, Sir John Barnard again observed; "It "would be impossible to prevent the running "of French rum on shore, even if we were to "send to America the whole army of Excise "officers which we have here at home. The "sending them thither, might indeed, add a

"good deal to our happiness in this country; "but all of them together, could be of no ser- "vice for such a purpose in that country."

In the debate on alienating part of the sinking fund, Feb. 23, a more decided attack was made by Pulteney, who said, "Though I was "aware of the motion now made, I was in "hopes that was not all the honourable gentle- "man was this day to open to the committee. "There is another thing, a very terrible affair "impending! A monstrous project! Yea, more "monstrous than has ever yet been represented! "It is such a project as has struck terror into "the minds of most gentlemen within this "house, and into the minds of all men without "doors, who have any regard to the happiness "or to the constitution of their country. I "mean, THAT MONSTER, THE EXCISE! THAT "PLAN OF ARBITRARY POWER, which is ex- "pected to be laid before this house in the pre- "sent session of parliament."

On the 27th of February, a call of the house being moved for that day fortnight, the Excise scheme was again introduced. Sir John Rushout commenced an attack on the minister, by saying, "I do not rise to oppose the call of the "house; but there being, as I imagine, a cer- "tain scheme or project to be brought into the "house, which seems to be of very great conse- "quence to the whole nation, I wish that the "call of the house may be about the time that "that scheme is to be laid before us. We have "long been in expectation of seeing this glo-

"rious scheme, which is to render us all com-
"pletely happy; we have waited for it with
"impatience ever since the beginning of the
"present session. I do not know whether the
"scheme itself has lately met with any altera-
"tions or amendments; but I hope, if it be to
"be laid before us this session, it will not be
"put off till towards the end, when gentlemen
"are tired out with attendance, and obliged
"to return home to mind their own private
"affairs."

Walpole replied, "As to the scheme men-
"tioned by the honourable gentleman who
"spoke last, it is certain that I have a scheme,
"which I intend very soon to lay before you.
"I have not indeed, as yet, fully determined
"what my motion shall be; but if the motion
"for the call of the house be appointed for this
"day fortnight, I believe I shall be fully deter-
"mined before that time. I do not desire, I
"never did desire to surprise this house in
"any thing; nor had I, thank God, ever any
"occasion to use the low art of taking advantage
"of the end of the session, for any thing I had
"to propose. But when the house does resolve
"itself into a committee, for which I mean to
"move, I will lay before that committee a
"scheme which I have long thought of, which I
"am convinced is for the good of the nation;
"and which, if agreed to, will improve both
"the trade and the public revenue. As for
"the scheme's having received alterations and
"amendments, I do not know but it may. I

"never thought myself so wise as to stand in "no need of assistance. On the contrary, I "have taken from others all the advice and "assistance I could obtain; and in all my in-"quiries, I have chose to consult with those who "I knew had a perfect knowledge of such affairs, "and had no particular interest in view, nor any "private end to serve. From those who have "by-ends of their own, I can never expect im-"partial counsel, and therefore I have in this, as "well as every other affair, thought it ridiculous "to ask their advice." He concluded by observing; "If a project could be framed to pre-"vent the frauds committed in the revenue, the "author of such project would deserve the "thanks of his country, and of every fair trader; "because, whenever a tax is laid on, and not "collected regularly and duly, from every man "subject to its operation, it is really making the "fair trader pay to the public, what the fraudu-"lent trader puts into his own private pocket; "by which means the smuggler undersells "the fair trader in every commodity, and "the fair trader must be at last ruined and "undone."

Sir William Wyndham followed, and affected to assume, as an abstract statement, that the question was, "Whether we should sacrifice the "constitution to the prevention of frauds in the "revenue?" Sir John Barnard seized this opportunity of making a popular speech, in which he said; "If I have been rightly informed, this "scheme, in its first conception, was for a

" *General Excise*, but that, it seems, was after-
" wards thought too much at once, and there-
" fore, we are now to single out only one or two
" branches, in order that they may first be
" hunted down. But the very same reason may
" prevail with us, to subject every branch to
" those arbitrary laws; and as such laws are, in
" my opinion, absolutely inconsistent with li-
" berty, therefore I must think that the ques-
" tion upon this scheme, even altered as it seems
" it is, will be, Whether we shall endeavour to
" prevent frauds in the collection of the public
" revenues, at the expense of the liberties of the
" people?" " For my own part," added he, " I
" never was guilty of any fraud, and therefore I
" speak against my own interest, when I speak
" against any method that may tend towards
" preventing frauds; but I will never put my
" private interest in balance with the interest or
" happiness of the nation. *I had rather beg my*
" *bread from door to door, and see my country*
" *flourish, than be the greatest subject in the nation,*
" *and see the trade of my country decaying, and*
" *the people enslaved and oppressed.*"

In the interval between the debate, and the call of the house, the minister was preparing to bring forward his scheme, in a manner as little exceptionable as possible, and the opposition were exerting all their powers and influence to form a strong party against it, and to excite the public to clamour for its rejection, whatever might be its merits.

On the 7th of March, the minister moved, and

carried, that on that day se'nnight, the house should resolve itself into a committee, to consider of the most proper methods for the better security and improvement of the duties and revenues already charged upon, and payable from tobacco and wines. It was farther ordered, that the proper accounts, returns, and other papers, should be referred to the said committee, and the commissioners of the Customs and Excise should attend.

On this occasion, all the arts and influence of opposition were called forth to excite clamours against the measure. Not only the members solicited the attendance of their friends, but letters were delivered by the beadles, and other officers in the parishes and wards of the city, to induce a numerous party to assemble at the doors, and in the avenues to the house, in order to overawe the proceedings of the legislature. Walpole was apprized of these proceedings, but not deterred from the prosecution of his design. On the 15th of March, the house having resolved itself into a committee, he opened the business, and said:

"As I* had the honour to move that the house should resolve itself into this committee, I think it incumbent on me to open to you, what was

* The substance of this speech is principally taken from heads and memorandums, in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole, among the Orford Papers. A few connecting sentences have been supplied from the printed speech in the contemporary publications: Political State; Historical Register. See also Chandler.

then intended to be proposed as the subject of your consideration. This committee is appointed for the better security of the duties and revenues already charged, and payable upon tobacco. This can be done in no way so proper and effectual, as by preventing the commission of those frauds, by which the revenue has already sustained such great injuries. As the proposed improvement is to be made by an alteration in the method of collecting and managing the duties already imposed, without any addition, or subjecting to the same duties any articles not already chargeable, I might have avoided stating this project to a committee of the whole house. But I have deserted the old road, and proposed a supply not immediately necessary for the current service of the year, that I might leave a greater freedom of consideration, by taking away every appearance of pressing necessity. I shall therefore only observe, that some previous provision must be made for the future application of the increased sum, which, should the plan I am about to propose be adopted, will be received into the exchequer.

The contest, in the present instance, is between the unfair trader, on one side; the fair trader, the planter, and the public, on the other. But to the public must be referred my most forcible appeal, as they, in truth, bear the whole weight of the injury. For though the fraudulent factor seems to make the planter, retailer, and consumer equally his prey; yet the landed in-

terest ultimately suffers the whole effect of the fraud, by making good what the subject pays, and the government does not receive.

"In such a cause, I might reasonably expect the approbation of the fair trader, and the assistance of parliament; for assuredly, if in these times any cause can possibly be considered exempt from the operations of party, it is the cause now before the committee. But, Sir, I am not to learn, that whoever attempts to remedy frauds, attempts a thing very disagreeable to all those who have been guilty of them, or who expect to derive future benefit from them. I know that these men, who are considerable in their numbers, and clamorous in their exertions, have found abettors in another quarter, in persons much worse than themselves; in men who are fond of improving every opportunity of stirring up the people to mutiny and sedition. But as the scheme I have to propose, will not only be a great improvement to the revenue, an improvement of two or three hundred thousand pounds a year, but also of great benefit to the fair trader, I shall not be deterred, either by calumny or clamour, from doing my duty as a member of this house, and bringing forward a measure, which my own conscience justifies me in saying, will be attended with the most important advantages to the revenues and commerce of my country.

Justum et tenacem propositi virum,
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Mente quatit solidâ.

"Amongst the many slanders to which the report of this project has exposed me, I cannot avoid mentioning one, which has been circulated with an assiduity proportioned to its want of truth, that I was about to propose *a General Excise.* In all plans for the benefit of government, two essential points must be considered; justice and practicability. Many things are just which would not be practicable; but such a scheme would be neither one nor the other. Various are the faults of ministers, various their fates: few have had the crimes of all; none till now found that the imputation of crime to him, became a merit in others. Yet if I were to propose to you such a scheme, popular opinion would run exactly in that channel. It would be a crime in me to propose, a crime in you to accept; and the only chance left to the house of retaining the favour of the people, would be the unqualified rejection of the project. But *I do most unequivocally assert, that no such scheme ever entered my head, or, for what I know, into the head of any man I am acquainted with.* Yet though I do not wish to do wrong, I shall always retain a proper share of courage and self-confidence to do what I judge right; and in the measures I am about to propose, shall rest my claim to support and approbation, on the candid, the judicious, and the truly patriotic.

"My thoughts have been confined solely to the revenue arising from the duties on wine and tobacco; and it was the frequent advices I had of the shameful frauds committed in these two

branches, and the complaints of the merchants themselves, that induced me to turn my attention to discover a remedy for this growing evil. I am persuaded, that what I am about to propose, will, if granted, be an effectual remedy. But, if gentlemen will be prevailed on by industry, artifice, and clamour, to indulge the suggestions of party prejudice, they and their posterity must pay dear for it, by the grievous entail of a heavy land tax, which they will have sanctioned by their pusillanimity, in not daring to brave the outrages of the fraudulent and self-interested. For myself, I shall only say, I have so little partiality for this scheme, except what a real and constitutional love of the public inspires, that if I fail in this proposal, it will be the last attempt of the kind I shall ever make; and I believe, a minister will not soon be found hardy enough to brave, on the behalf of the people, and without the slightest motive of interest, the worst effects of popular delusion and popular injustice.

"I shall for the present, confine myself entirely to the tobacco trade, and to the frauds practised in that branch of the revenue. If there is one subject of taxation more obvious than another, if there is one subject more immediately within the direct aim of fiscal imposition than another, it is such an article of luxury as depends for its use on custom or caprice, and is by no means essential to the support of real comfort or of human life. If there is a subject of taxation where it is more immediately the province of the legislature to suppress fraud, and

strictly to insist on the payment of every impost, it must be that where the wrong is felt by every class of persons, and none are benefited, except the most dishonest and profligate part of the community. Both these descriptions apply to the subject before us. For though the use of tobacco is perhaps less sanctioned by natural reason than any other luxury; yet so great is the predilection for it, in its various forms, that from the palace to the hovel there is no exemption from the duty. And surely it must be considered an intolerable grievance, that by the frauds which are daily committed, the very poorest of the peasantry are obliged to pay this duty twice: once in the enhanced price of the article (for though the fraudulent trader contrives to save to himself the amount of the tax imposed by parliament, yet he does not sell it cheaper to the public); and a second time, in the tax that is necessarily substituted to make good the deficiency which has been by these means occasioned. Did it ever happen till now, that when an abuse of this kind was to be remedied, endeavours were used to make the attempt unpopular?

"In discussing this subject, it will be necessary first to advert to the condition of our tobacco-planters in America. If they are to be believed, they are reduced to the utmost extremity, even almost to a state of despair, by the many frauds that have been committed in that trade; and by the ill usage they have sustained from their factors and correspondents in Eng-

land, who from being their servants, are become their tyrants. These unfortunate people have sent home many representations on the bad state of their affairs; they have lately deputed a gentleman with a remonstrance, setting forth their grievances, and praying for some speedy relief. This they may obtain by means of the scheme I intend now to propose; but I believe it is from that alone they can expect any relief.

"The next thing to be considered is, the state of the tobacco trade, with respect to the fair trader. The man who deals honourably with the public, as well as individuals, the man who honestly pays all his duties, finds himself forestalled in almost every market, within the island, by the smuggler and fraudulent dealer. As to our foreign trade in tobacco, those who have no regard to honour, to religion, or to the welfare of the country, but are every day contriving ways and means for cheating the public by perjuries and false entries, are the greatest gainers; and it will always be so, unless we can contrive some method of putting it out of their power to carry on such frauds for the future.

"We ought to consider the great loss sustained by the public, by means of the frauds committed in the tobacco trade, and the addition that must certainly be made to the revenue, if those frauds can be prevented in future. By this addition, parliament will acquire the means of exercising one of its most enviable privileges,

that of diminishing the burthens of the country, the power of doing which will thus be presented to them in various forms. If it should be the prevailing opinion, that the discharge of the national debt should be accelerated, this increase offers an abundant resource. If the idea should prevail, that those taxes ought to be alleviated which fall heaviest on our manufacturers, and the labouring poor, as soap and candles, this increase will replace the difference. Or if it should be judged that more immediate attention ought to be paid to the current service, the fund may be reserved for that use. And it is manifestly unjust and impolitic, that the national debt should be continued, and the payment postponed; that the heavy duties on our manufactures should remain, which are justly paid, and without fraud; or that ways and means for the current service should be annually imposed, if the present revenues will answer all or any of these purposes. This, I am convinced, will be the effect of the scheme I am to propose, and, whoever views it in its proper light, must see the planters, the fair traders, and the public, ranged on one side in support of it; and none but the unfair traders and tobacco factors on the other.

"I am aware that the evidence to prove the existence of the frauds I am about to enumerate, is not such as would be sufficient to induce a court of justice to pronounce the guilt of those to whom they may be imputed. But as I do not undertake the task of inculpation, if I make out such a case to the committee, as will enable them

to decide in the existence of the crime, they will not hesitate to apply the remedy. They will consider the deficiency of strict legal proof, as a motive for their interference, rather than their forbearance; more particularly when they reflect, that if persons are with difficulty induced to give testimony in such a case as this, where the good of the country only is to be pursued, without injury to any one, they will be still less easily brought forward to give such information as will tend to the ruin of others. In this case it is hardly too much to say, that gentlemen should learn from the example of those interested, how to conduct themselves. They have, with an alacrity and unblushing eagerness which proves, which confesses their guilt, hastily inferred the most violent intentions in the friends of government; they have assumed facts, and inferred intentions, without the smallest data on which to found their presumptions. I ask no more than this. If I succeed in making it appear that gross frauds are daily practised, and the revenue injured in a most daring and profligate manner, that the proposed remedy, should it appear adequate and applicable, may be resorted to, without subjecting me to the necessity of procuring that which is, in fact, unattainable, such precise proof as would satisfy the administrators of the laws in the disposal of property, or deciding on guilt. Such evidence, and such facts as I have been able to collect, it is my duty to lay before you; and it is your duty to support me, unless my plan appears totally void of reason and justice."

The minister then proceeded to give such preliminary statements and calculations, as were necessary to render his plans intelligible, to make the abuses obvious, and to demonstrate the propriety and necessity of reform. From these statements it appeared, that the existing duties on tobacco amounted to sixpence and one-third of a penny on every pound. The discounts, allowances, and drawbacks, were a total drawback on re-exportation; ten per cent. on prompt payment; and fifteen per cent. on bonded duties. The gross produce of the tax, at a medium, £.754,131. 4*s*. 7*d*. the nett produce only £.161,000.

Having made these statements with exactness and perspicuity, he proceeded:

"I shall now point out as clearly as I can, and as amply as my knowledge will enable me, the principal frauds and most glaring instances of dishonesty, which occasion this amazing disproportion. And first I shall mention one, which seems alone capable of diverting from its proper channel the amount of any tax. I mean that of using light weights inwards, and heavy weights outwards, of paying by the first, and taking the drawback by the last, and charging the planter, and taking commission by the whole. This evil is farther aggravated by negligence; for it is customary to weigh a few hogsheads only, and if they answer, the whole pass according to the numbers in the cocket.

"A particular instance of this fraud came lately to our knowledge by mere accident. One Mitford, who had been a considerable tobacco

merchant in the city, happened to fail, at a time when he owed a large sum of money on bond to the crown. An extent was immediately issued against him, and government obtained possession of all his books, by which the fraud was discovered. For it appeared, as may be seen by one of his books, which I have in my hand, that upon the column where the false quantities which had been entered at the importation, were marked, he had, by a collusion with the officer, got a slip of paper so artfully pasted down, that it could not be discovered, and upon this slip of paper were written the real quantities which were entered, because he was obliged to produce the same book when that tobacco was entered for exportation. But upon exportation, the tobacco was entered and weighed according to the quantities marked on this slip of paper, by which he secured a drawback, or his bonds returned, to near double the value of what he had actually paid duty for upon importation. Yet this Mitford was as honest a man, and as fair a trader, as any in the city of London. I desire not to be misunderstood. I mean, that before he failed, before these frauds came to be discovered, he was always reckoned as honest a man, and as fair a trader, as any in the city of London, or in any other part of the nation."

After enumerating several other instances where government had been defrauded of a full third of the duties imposed, and legally payable, he came to Peele's case, which is singular from its enormity. "In September, 1732, this Peele

entered in the James and Mary from Maryland, 310 hogsheads of tobacco, for which he paid the duty in ready money. In October following, he sold 200 hogsheads to one Mr. Hyam, for exportation, and they were immediately exported. It appears that the duties on these 200 hogsheads, paid at importation, according to the weights in the land-waiters books, were short of the real weights by 13,292 pounds. The certificates sworn to for Mr. Peele to obtain debentures, were to discharge bonds given on a former entry of Virginia tobacco, imported in November, 1731. The indorsement on the cocket made by Mr. Peele, in order to receive the debentures, exceeded the real weights actually shipped by 8,288 pounds, so that the total of the pounds weight gained by this fraud amounts to 21,580.

"The next fraud to which I shall direct your attention, is that of receiving the drawback on tobacco for exportation, and relanding it. The effects of this practice are too obvious to require elucidation, and it has been carried to such an extent, that a great number of ships were employed at Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man, in receiving and relanding such tobacco. Nor was the evil confined to these ports. A very intelligent gentleman, Mr. Howell who resided many years in Flanders, has frequently observed several quantities of tobacco imported into Ostend and Dunkirk, and there repacked in bales of one hundred pounds each, and put on board vessels which waited there to reland it in

England or Ireland. About twelve months ago, nine British vessels were employed in taking cargoes for this purpose at Dunkirk.

"The third fraud to which I shall direct the attention of the committee is that of receiving the whole drawback for a commodity of almost no value, namely, the stalks of the tobacco, which it is usual, after the leaf has been stripped off, to press flat and cut, and by mixing this offal with sand and dust, to impose on the revenue officers, and obtain the same drawback as for an equal weight of the entire plant. This miserable stuff, when the fraudulent purpose has once been answered, is either thrown into the sea, or relanded and sold at three farthings a pound, with an allowance of 1,010 pounds weight in five hogsheads.

"The fourth fraud I shall advert to, is one of very great consequence, known by the name of *socking*, which is a cant term for pilfering and stealing tobacco from ships in the river. This iniquitous practice, which was discovered in 1728 and 1729, was chiefly carried on by watermen, lightermen, tide-waiters, and city porters, called gangs-men. The pilfered commodity was deposited in houses from London Bridge to Woolwich, and afterwards sold, frequently to eminent merchants. Five hundred examinations have been taken on the subject, from which it appears, that in the space of one year, fifty tons were socked on board ships and on the quays. Sixteen tons were seized, but that quantity was reckoned an inconsiderable part of

the whole. In consequence of these informations, 150 officers were dismissed, nine were convicted, of whom six are ordered for transportation, three to be whipt. These prosecutions were all made at the expense of government; and it is not a little remarkable, when we recollect the professions of patriotism, virtue, and disinterestedness, which are now so copiously poured forth, that not a single merchant, though the facts were so notorious and shameful, assisted the state, either by information or pecuniary exertion, to suppress the fraud, or bring the delinquents to punishment.

"The last grievance I shall mention, cannot so properly be denominated a fraud, as an abuse arising from the nature of the duties paid, and the manner of paying them. I mean the advantage afforded to the merchant of trading with the public money, or making government pay more than they receive. Bonds are given for eighteen months; three years are allowed for the exportation of the article; and new importations discharge old bonds. The losses which result to government from the failure of the obligators in these bonds, is immense; besides the ungracious task to which it subjects them of suing the sureties, who had no interest in the contract. The rich trader has another advantage. He avoids giving bonds, by paying the amount of his duties in ready money, for which he is allowed a discount of ten per cent. Now it is very common, and not out of the line of fair trade, for a merchant to pay this duty to

receive the discount, and by immediately entering the same commodity for exportation, to gain an advantage (I will not say defraud the revenue) of ten per cent. without loss, risk, or expenditure.

"The frauds which I have here enumerated are, I apprehend, sufficiently proved to satisfy the committee of their existence, and their enormity is obvious enough to demand active interference. The only remedy I can devise, is that of altering the manner of collecting the duties. Frauds become practicable by having but one check at importation, and one at exportation. If there is but one sentinel at a garrison, and he sleeps, or is corrupted, the castle is taken; but if there are more than one, it is in vain to corrupt the first, without extending the same influence to those who remain; and when difficulties are so multiplied, the project becomes hazardous and uncertain, and is abandoned.

"If the grievance then is admitted, it only remains to mention the remedy, and to consider whether it is effectual, or whether it is worse than the disease.

"The laws of the Customs are manifestly insufficient to prevent the frauds which already exist; I therefore propose to add the laws of Excise; and by means of both, it is probable, I may say certain, that all such frauds will be prevented in future.

"I have already stated to the committee, that the several imposts on tobacco amount to six-

pence and one third of a penny per pound, all of which must be paid down in ready money upon importation, with the allowance of ten per cent. upon prompt payment; or bonds must be given, with sufficient sureties, for payment, which is often a great loss to the public, and always a great inconvenience to the merchant importer. Whereas, by what I shall propose, the whole duty will amount to no more than four-pence three farthings per pound, and will not be paid till the tobacco is sold for home consumption; so that if the merchant exports his tobacco, he will be quite free from all payment of duty, or giving security. He will have nothing to do but re-load his tobacco for exportation, without being at the trouble of attending to have his bonds cancelled, or taking out debentures for the drawbacks. All which, I conceive, must be a great ease to the fair trader; and to every such trader the prevention of frauds must be a great advantage, because it will put all the tobacco traders in Britain on the same footing, which is but just and equitable, and what ought, if possible, to be accomplished.

" Now, to make this ease effectual to the fair trader, and contribute to his advantage, by preventing, as much as possible, all frauds for the future, I propose, as I have said, to join the laws of Excise to those of the Customs, and to leave the one penny, or rather three farthings per pound, called the farther subsidy, to be still charged at the custom house upon the importation of tobacco, which three farthings shall be

payable to his majesty's civil list as heretofore. And I propose for the future, that all tobacco, after being weighed at the custom-house, and charged with the said three farthings per pound, shall be lodged in a warehouse or warehouses, to be appointed by the commissioners of Excise for that purpose, of which warehouse the merchant importer shall have one lock and key, and the warehouse-keeper to be appointed by the said commissioners shall have another, that the tobacco may lie safe in that warehouse, till the merchant finds a market for it, either for exportation or home consumption. If his market be for exportation, he may apply to his warehouse-keeper, and take out as much for that purpose as he needs, which, when weighed at the custom-house, shall be discharged of the three farthings per pound with which it was charged upon importation, so that the merchant may then export it without any farther trouble. But if his market be for home consumption, he shall pay the three farthings charged upon it at the custom-house upon importation, and then, upon calling his warehouse-keeper, he may deliver it to the buyer, on paying an inland duty of four pence per pound, to the proper officer appointed to receive the same.

"And whereas all penalties and forfeitures to become due by the laws now in being, for regulating the collection of the duties on tobacco, or at least all that part of them which is not given to informers, now belong to the crown, I propose that all such penalties and forfeitures, in so far

as they formerly belonged to the crown, shall for the future belong to the public, and be applicable to the same uses to which the said duties shall be made applicable by parliament; and for that purpose I have the king's commands to acquaint the house, that he, out of his great regard for the public good, with pleasure consents that they shall be so applied; which is a condescension in his majesty, that I hope every gentleman in this house will freely acknowledge.

"Having thus explained my scheme to the committee, I shall briefly touch on the advantages to be derived from it, and anticipate some of the objections which may probably be made.

"First then, turning duties upon importation into duties on consumption, is manifestly a great benefit to the merchant importer. Paying down duties, or bonding, are heavy burthens. The payment of duties requires a treble stock to what would else be requisite in trade; and the asking of securities, besides numerous other inconveniences, subjects the merchant to the necessity of returning the favour. It hardly requires to be mentioned, that it is a very great accommodation to be obliged to provide for the payment of one penny only, instead of six pence and one third of a penny.

"The next benefit is the great abatement on the whole duty. The inland duty being four pence per pound, and the remaining subsidy three farthings, gives an abatement of 10 per cent. and of 15 per cent. upon the whole: whereas, the 25 per cent. is at present given

only on the money paid down, which is not a fifth of the whole, and but 15 per cent. allowed on the four fifths which is bonded. Thus a duty of five pence farthing is paid on four fifths of the tobacco, and four pence three farthings on the other fifth; while by the plan I propose, no more than four pence three farthings will be paid on the whole. It is easy to calculate how great the advantages must be to the planter and fair trader from this arrangement, which demands so small an advance, exempts them from all the inconveniences of finding sureties, and requires no payment of any consequence, till the moment when a purchaser presents himself to refund the cost.

"If it should be objected against this project, that it makes the tobacco trade a ready money business, which it cannot bear; I answer, that it may be so or not, as the parties themselves may choose to arrange it; for if the merchant gives the consumer credit, as he now does, for the duties as well as the commodity, the objection ceases to have any weight.

"The great advantage to the public will be this, that no duty being paid on tobacco designed for exportation, an immediate stop will be put to the fraud on drawbacks, and to most of the disgraceful efforts of dishonesty, which I have previously enumerated. This fact does not require to be verified by experiment; it is sufficiently proved by the success and facility which attend the collection of the malt duty.

"I come now to the main point, and which

alone can admit of debate; the grand objection of making the dealers in tobacco subject to the laws of Excise. I am aware, that on this subject I have arguments, or rather assertions to encounter, which are of great import in sound, though of very little in sense. Those who deal in these general declamations stigmatize the scheme in the most unqualified manner, as tending to reduce those subjected to it to a state of slavery. This is an assertion, the fallacy of which can only be determined by comparison. There are already ten or twelve articles of consumption subjected to the Excise laws; the revenue derived from them amounts to about £. 3,200,000 per annum, which is appropriated to particular purposes. A great number of persons are, of course, involved in the operation of these laws. Yet, till the present moment, when so inconsiderable an addition is proposed, not a word has been uttered about the dreadful hardships to be apprehended from them. These clamours of interested and disaffected persons are best answered by the contented taciturnity of those in whose behalf their arguments, if of any force, ought to operate. Are the brewers and maltsters slaves, or do they reckon themselves so? Are they not as free in elections, to elect or be elected, as any others? or let any gentleman present say, if he ever met with any opposition from, or by means of an exciseman?

"I quit this general topic to advert to more particular and specific objections. The chief of them are, houses liable to be searched; being

subject to the determination of commissioners without appeal, who are necessarily creatures of the crown; the number of Excise officers; the injury the subject will sustain in being tried without a jury; and the particular interest of the crown in this alteration.

"To all these objections one general observation will apply. If for these reasons this scheme is to be relinquished, the whole system of Excise laws ought to be abandoned. But I shall examine them one by one. I begin with the last, the most cruel and unjust, because it tends to set up an improper distinction, and draw a strong line of opposition between the interests of the crown and the interests of the people; that is to say, between the estate and particular property of the crown, and the estate and particular property of the public. This naturally leads to a general consideration of the public revenues.

"The revenues may be computed at £. 6,700,000 per annum. The public has of this, as its particular interest and property, about £. 5,900,000 per annum, namely, the appropriated funds and annual supplies. The proportion remaining to the crown, £. 800,000, is not an eighth part of the whole. And here, in order to obviate a general misrepresentation, it is necessary to state, that the civil list revenues, in five years, from Midsummer 1727 to Midsummer 1732, have fallen short of the sum they are supposed to produce, by upwards of £. 26,000 a year on the average. Happy indeed would be the state of the country, if the appropriated duties would

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answer all the proper engagements, and leave a surplus sufficient for the current service! But if that great object is not attainable, it is surely well worth the attention of parliament to provide for a moiety, or even a fourth part of the current service. The appropriated duties were funds for paying the interest of the national debt. There had been deficiencies in several, but now a supply is made; a sinking fund for gradually discharging the principal. A million per annum has for several years been applied, and that, by the public creditors, is now thought more than sufficient.

"If under the present management, the duties produce much less than ought to be paid to the public, has the public a right to make the most of their own revenues, or are they alone excluded from doing themselves justice? To object against the improvement of the king's part, is to say, that the public had better be defrauded of seven parts in eight, than that justice should be done to the crown in the eighth. If manifest frauds were discovered in a branch belonging entirely to the civil list, the post office for example, would you rather sanction the wrong, than do justice to the crown? Why then this unreasonable jealousy in the present instance? I call the jealousy unreasonable; because in this proposition all possible care has been taken to avoid the imputation that it is designed for the benefit of the crown. The penny which goes to the civil list is left to be paid at the custom-house. All increase from the inland duty is not to go to the crown, but to the public. All fines, forfei-

tures, and penalties, arising from the inland duties, are renounced by the crown, and appropriated to the public. In a word, the crown will have no interest in the inland duty, but as trustee for the public.

"This fact, duly considered, answers the great objection to the determination of commissioners. Granting, for a moment, that commissioners are to be supposed corrupt, venal, and creatures of the crown, what influence can their regard for the crown have on them, to induce them to oppress the people, when the crown has no interest in their determination? But though this answer might reasonably be deemed satisfactory and sufficient; yet, to obviate even speculative objections, a remedy is supplied for this supposed grievance, by investing three of the twelve judges with a power of determining, in a summary way, all appeals brought before them within the bills of mortality; and in the country, the same power is to be vested in one of the judges of the assize, going the next circuit. This renders it impossible that the interest of the subject can be sacrificed to undue influence on one hand, or the revenue to private solicitation, personal friendship, or regard on the other. While such a tribunal presents itself, no offender would choose to be carried into Westminster hall, rather than have his cause judged in a summary way. The benefit of a trial by jury would not induce a man to encounter the tedious, vexatious, and expensive proceedings in a court of law, more burthensome than the penalties and

forfeitures in dispute. As far as my own observation enables me to judge on the present system, where the commissioners have, in most cases, a power to determine themselves, or to bring informations, I have found that most people, against whom informations have been laid, have been desirous that their causes should be determined by commissioners; but I never yet heard of one who was willing to take his cause out of the hands of the commissioners to have it tried in Westminster hall. One reason which contributes to render the exercise of power by the commissioners more popular is, that they possess the privilege of mitigation, which is not entrusted to the judges, who are merely administrators of the law according to the letter.

"The next objection is the increase of revenue officers, which fear, interest, and affectation have magnified into a standing army. This standing army, allowing the proposed addition to extend to tobacco and wine, will not, according to the estimate of the commissioners, exceed *one hundred and twenty-six* persons. That number, in addition to those already employed, will do all the duty. In this computation, warehouse-keepers are of course not included, their number must be uncertain, for the satisfaction and accommodation of the merchants. Few houses, however, out of London, will be subject to the Excise laws which are not so already.

"The only remaining objection is, the power of officers to enter and search houses. This objection could not possibly have any weight, with-

out the aid of gross misconception, or misrepresentation. All warehouses, cellars, shops, and rooms used for keeping, manufacturing, or selling tobacco, are to be entered at the inland office. These are to be always liable to the inspection of the officer, and it is to be made penal, to keep or conceal tobacco in any room or place not entered. But no other part of the house is liable to be searched without a warrant and a constable, which warrant is not to be granted, without an affidavit of the cause of suspicion. The practice of the customs is now stronger; they can enter with a writ of assistance without any affidavit. But why all this solicitude in the behalf of fraud? If the powers given by either, or both the systems of revenue law are not sufficient (as I am informed they are not in the case of tea), it is an argument to add more checks, but no argument against the application of this.

"The regulation in these two commodities, can affect neither trade, the poor, nor the manufacturer. The poor are not at all concerned in the question of tobacco, as the retailer now sells all tobacco at the rate of duty paid. The manufacturer is concerned as little, for the same reason, and neither one nor the other drinks wine. The landed interest cannot be affected by it in consequence of an advanced charge on the poor and the manufacturer. The whole clamour then is in favour of the retailer or tradesman, and even he cannot suffer, unless guilty of frauds. This is the scheme which has been represented in so

dreadful and terrible a light; this is the monster, the many-headed monster, which was to devour the people, and commit such ravages over the whole nation. How justly it has been represented in such a light, I shall leave to this committee and to the world without doors to judge. I have said, and will repeat it, that whatever apprehensions and terrors people may have been brought under from a false and malicious representation of what they neither did, nor could know or understand, I am fully persuaded, when they have duly considered the scheme I have now the honour to open to you, that they will view it in another light. If it has the good fortune to meet the approbation of parliament, and takes effect, the people will soon feel the happy consequences of it; and when they experience these good effects, they will no longer look on those persons as their friends, who have so grossly imposed on their understandings.

"I look upon it as a most innocent scheme; it can be hurtful to none but smugglers and unfair traders. I am certain it will be of great benefit to the revenue, and will tend to make LONDON A FREE PORT, AND BY CONSEQUENCE, THE MARKET OF THE WORLD. If I had thought otherwise, I would never have ventured to propose it in this place."

He then concluded, by moving a repeal of the subsidy and additional duty on tobacco, amounting in the whole to five pence and one third of a penny in the pound weight.

The members of opposition were not silenced

or dismayed by the ample and candid manner in which the minister opened and explained his scheme, and pointed out its benefits. Though he had anticipated many of their objections, and shown their futility; yet they brought them forward with as much confidence and perseverance as if they had been perfectly just, and entirely new. The debate was long and animated. The minister was principally supported by Mr. Yorke, then attorney general, and afterwards earl of Hardwicke, and Sir Joseph Jekyl, master of the rolls. The principal orators of opposition were alderman Perry, Sir Paul Methuen, Sir John Barnard, Heathcote, Pulteney, and Sir William Wyndham, who peculiarly distinguished himself on this occasion.

Their efforts were generally directed to countenance the popular clamours, which they themselves had excited. They recurred to all the inflammatory topics drawn from the introduction of a standing army of excisemen, giving arbitrary power to the crown, and enslaving the subject. They deprecated the proposed scheme, by affecting to demonstrate, that when the manner of committing a fraud was discovered, the farther perpetration of it became impracticable. Alderman Perry, in the name of the merchants of London, offered to answer for all the bonds out-standing, in consideration of a discount of £.20,000, but he took care to except all those which were desperate, and made no calculation of their probable amount. Sir John Barnard called in the commissioners of the Customs, who

were obviously interested to prevent the completion of the Excise scheme, and asked them what they thought the frauds in the tobacco trade might amount to, one year with another? They answered, they had never made any computation; but one of them said that he had, as matter of private curiosity, calculated on the subject, and thought it might amount to thirty or forty thousand pounds a year. Sir John then inquired, Whether it was their opinion, that if the officers of the customs did their duty diligently and faithfully, it would effectually prevent all or most of the frauds in the tobacco trade? This was, of course, answered in the affirmative. On the basis of this loose unauthenticated information, and hardy assertion, the opposition reviled the scheme with the most unqualified abuse, and unsparing ridicule.

Pulteney said, "The honourable gentleman was pleased to dwell on the generosity of the crown in giving up the fines, forfeitures, and seizures to the public; but in my opinion, it will be a poor equivalent for the many oppressions and exactions to which the people will be exposed by this scheme. I must say, that the honourable gentleman has been, of late, mighty bountiful and liberal in his offers to the public. He has been so gracious to ask us, Will you have a land tax of two shillings in the pound? A land tax of one shilling in the pound? Or will you have no land tax at all? Will you have your debts paid? Will you have them soon paid? Tell me but what you want; let me but know

how you can be made easy, and it shall be done. These are most generous offers; but there is something so very extraordinary, so farcical in them, that really, I can hardly mention them without laughing. It puts me in mind of the story of Sir Epicure Mammon in the Alchymist. He was gulled of his money by fine promises; he was promised the philosopher's stone, by which he was to get mountains of gold, and every thing else he could desire; but all ended at last in *some little thing for curing the itch.*"

Sir William Wyndham made a most able and vehement speech, in which he alluded to *Empsom* and *Dudley*, who, to gratify the avarice of their master, drained the purses of the subjects, not by new taxes, but by a severe and rigorous execution of the laws that had been enacted. "But what was their fate? They had the misfortune to out-live their master; and his son, as soon as he came to the throne, took off both their heads." "There never was a scheme," he added, "which encountered so much dislike and dissatisfaction from the people in general; the whole nation has already so openly declared their aversion, that I am surprised to see it insisted on. The very proposal of such a scheme in the house of commons, after so many remonstrances against it, I must think most audacious; it is, in a manner, flying in the face of the whole people of England."

In reply to these observations, the minister said, that much of the matter thrown out by the speakers on the other side was foreign to

the debate: that the ancient historians, not only of this but other countries, had been ransacked to find parallel cases of wicked ministers, and make affected applications. "Of late years," he said, "I have dwelt but little in the study of history, but I have a very good prompter behind me" (meaning the attorney general), "and by his means I can recollect, that the case of *Empsom* and *Dudley* was so different from any thing that can be presumed from the case now before us, that I wonder how it was possible to bring them into the debate. Those men had, by virtue of old and obsolete laws, unjustly extorted great sums of money from people, under pretence that they had become liable to penalties for the breach of statutes, which had for many years fallen into disuse. I must say (and I hope most of those who hear me will think) that it is very unjust to draw any parallel between their characters and mine. If my character is, or should ever come to be, in any respect, like their's, I shall deserve their fate. But while I know myself innocent, I shall depend upon the protection of the laws of my country. As long as they can protect me I am safe; and if that protection should fail, I am prepared to submit to the worst that can happen. I know that my political and ministerial life has by some gentlemen been long wished at an end; but they may ask their own disppointed hearts, how vain their wishes have been: and as for my natural life, I have lived long enough to learn to be easy about parting with it."

He then adverted to the artifices which had been used to exasperate the people, whom he compared to puppets, played by persons behind the curtain, and obliged to say whatever they pleased. He exposed the methods which had been used to draw a concourse of people to the door, such as sending circular letters by the beadles; and concluded in these words; "Gentlemen may say what they please of the multitudes now at our door, and in all the avenues leading to this house; they may call them a modest multitude if they will; but whatever temper they were in when they came hither, it may be very much altered now; after having waited so long at our door. It may be very easy for some designing seditious person to raise a tumult and disorder among them, and when tumults are once begun, no man knows where they may end. He is a greater man than any I know in the nation, that could with the same ease appease them. For this reason, I think it was neither regular nor prudent to use methods for bringing such multitudes to this place, under any pretence whatever. Gentlemen may give them what name they think fit; it may be said they came hither as humble supplicants, but I know whom the law calls *sturdy beggars*,* and those who brought them

* I was informed, on the respectable authority of the late much to be regretted lord John Cavendish, that the minister used the phrase *sturdy beggars*, not as a matter of reproach, but to mark that the petitioners against the excise, were formidable petitioners.

hither, could not be certain but that they might have behaved in the same manner."

After a few words from Sir John Barnard, in which he defended the assembling of people at the doors, and affectedly gave to the phrase *sturdy beggars*, that invidious sense in which it was afterwards so much repeated by the enemies of the minister, the question was called for, and passed by a majority of 61; (266 against 205). The first resolution being thus carried, three others were agreed to without a division.

The debate was protracted till two o'clock in the morning, an hour then considered as extremely late. The people without were so exasperated, that as Sir Robert passed towards his carriage, some of them caught him by the cloak, and would probably have committed a violent outrage on his person, if his son, Edward Walpole, and general Churchill had not interfered.

On the 16th Sir Charles Turner, according to order, reported to the house the proceedings of the committee. The debate was resumed with increased acrimony. Sir John Barnard, Bacon, Sir Thomas Aston, lord Morpeth, Pulteney, and Walter Plumer opposed the question, that the house should agree to the report. Horace Walpole, lord Hervey, Sir Thomas Robinson, lord Glenorchy, Clayton, and Sir Robert Walpole supported it. The house divided; the affirmative was voted by a majority of 60 (249 against 189); and Sir Charles Turner, the chancellor

of the exchequer, the attorney general, the solicitor general, Dodington, Clayton, Sir William Yonge, Sir George Oxendon, Scrope, and Edward Walpole, were directed to prepare and bring in the bill.

The effect of this bill on the public mind was so great, and the ferment it occasioned so violent, that I have judged it proper to state every division which took place during its discussion, drawn from the Journals. It is unnecessary to specify the particulars of the debates, which, though conducted with great asperity, contained little novelty, and were often on mere points of order, or discussion of precedents.

The bill was read a first time on the 4th of April. An objection was made that some parts were not within the compass of the resolutions, and that it should therefore be withdrawn. This was overruled by a majority of 56 (232 against 176). A motion being then made for the house to adjourn, was negatived by 237 against 199, and another for the second reading on that day se'nnight was carried by a majority of 36 (236 against 200). The next day it was proposed to print the bill, and distribute a proper number of copies to the members of the house, which being opposed by the minister, was negatived by a majority of 16 (128 against 112).

The lord mayor of London, however, contrived to obtain a copy, and laid it before the common council; who resolved to petition the house against the bill, and prayed to be heard

by counsel. The petition was patronised by Sir John Barnard, and on the 10th of April ordered to lie on the table; but the prayer to be heard by counsel was over-ruled by a majority of 17 (214 against 197). The next day similar applications were made from the towns of Nottingham and Coventry. The order of the day being then read, for the second reading of the bill, Walpole moved that it should be postponed to the twelfth day of June. As it was generally understood, that the house would adjourn before that day, it was manifest that the minister meant to abandon his scheme. This mode, however, of dropping it, did not please; the opposition wished it to be rejected with some severe animadversion; but though some hints were thrown out to that effect, yet the general sense of the house, which was uncommonly full, was so apparent against it, that they did not think it prudent to make any specific motion.

Many conjectures have been made on the motive which induced the minister to abandon his plan; but I find none so satisfactory as the dislike of thwarting the public opinion. The decline of his majority from 61 on the first, to 17 on the last division, affords no solution of his motives; for the intermediate questions were not of so much importance as the first, and though some of his friends undoubtedly from a dread of encountering the fury of a misguided populace, retired for a time from the scene of contest, I do not find, from the printed list in the Historical Register, that more than four joined the

standard of opposition. Nor is it probable that the threat of farther desertions alarmed the minister; because, if his partisans had resolved to abandon him, they would have united themselves with the opposition, and have formed a constant majority in the house against him. An anecdote recorded by one of his friends, renders it still more probable, that his unwillingness to carry any measure marked by popular disapprobation, was the true motive of his conduct.

"On the evening before the report, Sir Robert summoned a meeting of the principal members who had supported the bill. It was very largely attended. He reserved his own opinion till the last; but perseverance was the unanimous voice. It was urged that all taxes were obnoxious, and there would be an end of supplies, if mobs were to control the legislature in the manner of raising them. When Sir Robert had heard them all, he observed: 'I am conscious of having meant well; but in the present inflamed temper of the people, the act could not be carried into execution without an armed force; and there will be an end of the liberty of England, if supplies are to be raised by the sword. If, therefore, the resolution is, to proceed with the bill, I will instantly request the king's permission to resign, for I will not be the minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood.'"*

* This anecdote is mentioned in "Historical Remarks on the Taxation of free States," on the authority of Mr. White, member for Retford, who lived in friendship with Sir Robert Walpole.

Though the house did not rise, as was expected, before the 12th of June, yet they adjourned over that day, so that the tobacco bill was dropt, and the wine bill was never brought forward. The defeat of this proposition was celebrated in London, and various parts of the kingdom, as a great national victory. Bonfires were made, effigies burnt, cockades were generally worn, inscribed with the motto of *Liberty, Property, and no* EXCISE; the Monument was illuminated, and every demonstration given of exuberant triumph and excessive joy. The university of Oxford caught the same folly, and carried their rejoicings to a most indecent excess. The gownsmen joined and encouraged the mob, jacobinical cries resounded through the town, and three days passed in this disgraceful manner, before the vice chancellor and proctors could restore tranquillity.

The public rejoicings, and the general aversion entertained against the Excise, inspired the opposition with hopes that they should be enabled, through that medium, to embarrass government, and effect the removal of the minister, by compelling him to repeal the whole body of Excise laws. With this view, a petition from the dealers in tea and coffee, praying for relief against the Excise laws, as oppressive and injurious to trade, was presented on the 10th of April, but it was rejected by 250 against 150.*

Notwithstanding this defeat, the opposition

* Journals.

still laboured under two gross mistakes. The first was, that many members who promoted the bill, had voted in contradiction to their real sentiments from self-interest; and the second, that the king did not cordially support the minister, but waited only for a favourable opportunity of removing him. They had the mortification, however, to be fully undeceived in these opinions. A sufficient proof that they had undervalued the number of those members who were attached to the minister, soon appeared, upon a motion made April 25, for appointing by ballot a committee to inquire into the frauds in the Customs. This proposal was intended to reduce the minister to a dilemma. If it had been rejected, it would have been said, that he durst not stand an inquiry into the facts which he had laid down as the principle on which the Excise bill was founded: if carried, great hopes were entertained, that in choosing a committee by ballot, many of those members who, they believed, had supported the minister from a dread of incurring his displeasure, would venture to give their votes in favour of their list, in preference to the court list, when it would not be known for which list each particular person gave his vote. No opposition being made, a ballot took place, and a warm contest ensued. Each side acted an open and manly part. Their respective lists contained the names of those only who were staunch friends, and the court list was carried by a majority of 85. This decisive victory put an end to the efforts

and hopes of opposition for this session of parliament.*

They were no less undeceived in their opinion, that the king did not cordially support the minister. Some persons of great consequence, had also about this period joined opposition, and this defection was increased from an idea which generally prevailed, that the credit of Walpole was declining, and his disgrace certain. In the house of peers, the opposition, which had been rendered formidable by the junction of lord Carteret, was considerably increased by the defection of several who enjoyed very profitable posts under the crown. The earl of Chesterfield, lord steward of the household, the earl of Burlington, captain of the band of pensioners, lord Clinton, lord of the bed chamber, and three Scotch peers, the duke of Montrose, keeper of the great seal, the earl of Stair, vice admiral, and the earl of Marchmont, lord register. To these were added, lord Cobham, colonel of the king's regiment of horse, and the duke of Bolton, colonel of the king's regiment of horse guards. Many of these had influenced their friends in the house of commons, and particularly the three brothers of lord Chesterfield, had voted against the Excise bill. It was generally believed, that the number and consequence of these peers would prevent the minister from venturing to remove them, and that the king would not consent to their dismission or resignation. But the

* De la Faye and Thomas Pelham, to the earl Waldegrave. Correspondence, April 26.

event proved otherwise. On the 11th of April the Excise bill was abandoned; and on the 13th, as the earl of Chesterfield,* in company with lord Scarborough, was going up the great staircase of the palace at St. James's, he was informed by a servant of the duke of Grafton, that his grace wished to see him on business of the greatest importance. On returning home the duke of Grafton waited on him, and acquainted him that he was come by the king's command to require the surrender of the white staff, which was immediately delivered. The dismission of Chesterfield was followed by the removal of Montrose, the earls of Stair, Burlington, and Marchmont, and lord Clinton. The resentment of the minister was carried so far, that lord Cobham and the duke of Bolton were even deprived of their regiments.†

The authority of the minister was also fully proved by the nomination of his confidential friends to the vacant offices, among whom the earl of Ilay was most conspicuous. His son, lord Walpole, was also made lord lieutenant of the county of Devon, in the room of lord Clinton, and all doubts of his superior influence in the cabinet, were removed by the appointment of Sir Charles Wager to the office of first lord of the admiralty, vacant by the death of lord Torrington, which took place in June. His power on this occasion was far more evident, because there was no instance, since the accession of the

* Maty's Life of Lord Chesterfield. Sect. 4.

† Historical Register.

house of Brunswick, that a commoner was raised to that high office, and because George the Second had a strong predilection for persons of rank, and had often been informed, that the family of Sir Charles Wager was not sufficiently distinguished.

It is curious to observe the veteran seaman, in a letter to Sir Robert Walpole,* founding his title to that post, not on his naval services, which no one could deny, but on a fanciful genealogy. The demur, however, was over-ruled by the minister; the king's scruples were removed; the Herald's office did not stand in his way, and he was placed at the head of the admiralty, which post he continued to fill, during the administration of Walpole, with much advantage to the minister, with great benefit to his country, and with no less credit to himself.

The king, in his speech from the throne, on the prorogation of the parliament, adverted to the artifices employed to delude the minds of the people, and to pervert the truth. "I cannot pass by unobserved, the wicked endeavours that have lately been made use of to inflame the minds of the people, and by the most unjust misrepresentation to raise tumults and disorders, that almost threatened the peace of the kingdom. But I depend upon the force of truth, to remove the groundless jealousies that have been raised of designs carrying on against the liberties of my people, and upon your known fidelity to defeat

* Sir Charles Wager to Sir Robert Walpole, 12 July, 1731. Correspondence, Period V.

and frustrate the expectations of such as delight in confusion. It is my inclination, and has always been my study, to preserve the religious and civil rights of all my subjects. Let it be your care to undeceive the deluded, and to make them sensible of their present happiness, and the hazard they run, of being unwarily drawn, by specious pretences, into their own destruction."

CHAPTER 42.

1734.

Character of Lord Hardwicke—Parliamentary Proceedings—Efforts of the Minority in Parliament—Attempt to renew the discussion on the Excise—The Removal of the Duke of Bolton and Lord Cobham—The Place Bill—Motion for the Repeal of Septennial Parliaments—Sir William Wyndham's Speech—Walpole's Reply—Bolingbroke's retreat to France—The King's Speech—Dissolution of Parliament.

IN consequence of the numerous removals and resignations among the peers, which had taken place the last session, the opposition in the upper house became extremely formidable, and the majority of good speakers were ranged on that side. To counterbalance this preponderancy, Sir Philip Yorke was made lord chief justice of the court of King's Bench, and created a peer.

This great lawyer, who sat so long, and with so distinguished a character for integrity and knowledge at the head of the law, had raised himself solely by his eminent talents. The eloquence which he displayed at the bar had recommended him to notice, and in 1719 he was appointed solicitor general, in the 30th year of his age. At the same time he was re-elected for the borough of Lewes in Sussex, by the interest of

his patron, the duke of Newcastle. In 1723 he was nominated attorney general, and highly distinguished himself by his prudent and able speeches in the house of commons. In October, 1733, he was constituted lord chief justice of the King's Bench, and in November, in the same year, called to the upper house, by the title of baron Hardwicke. The style of his eloquence was more adapted to the house of lords than to the house of commons. The tone of his voice was pleasing and melodious; his manner was placid and dignified. Precision of arrangement, closeness of reasoning, fluency of expression, elegance of diction, great knowledge of the subject on which he spoke, were his particular characteristics. He seldom rose into great animation; his chief aim was more to convince than amuse; to appeal to the judgment rather than to the feelings of his auditors. He possessed a perfect command over himself, and his even temper was never ruffled by petulant opposition, or malignant invective.

The parliament assembled on the 17th January, and as it was the last session, the minority exerted their utmost efforts to distress the minister, and to increase his unpopularity.

The plan of attack was in this, as in the session of 1730, principally formed by Bolingbroke; and under his auspices, and by his direction, ably conducted by Sir William Wyndham, who seems to have particularly distinguished himself in the debates.

They first tried their strength in various mo-

tions for papers and copies of instructions, which were sent to the British ministers in France and Spain; for an address to know how far the king were engaged by his good offices in the causes of the war against the Emperor; and for an account of what application had been made by the parties engaged in hostilities. In these motions their exertions were baffled by the minister, and the smallest majority in his favour was 95. Having exhausted their efforts in regard to foreign transactions, in which he appeared to be most vulnerable, they directed their views to domestic events.

They attempted to renew the public clamours about the Excise, to accuse the minister of not having totally relinquished that scheme, but of waiting only for a favourable opportunity of again introducing it. For this purpose a petition being on the 4th of February presented from the druggists, and other dealers in tea, for relief against the Excise laws, some of the leading members of opposition attempted to revive the debate, and were inexcusably personal in their invectives against the minister. Pulteney in particular observed, "I am persuaded he still entertains the same opinion of the Excise, and waits only for a proper opportunity to renew it; for which reason he is unwilling that we should go into such a committee as is now proposed, lest we should sap all the foundations of any future project for a farther extension of the Excise laws." The reply of the minister to this insinuation was direct and manly. After repelling the

attacks with equal spirit and energy, he said, "As to the wicked scheme, as the gentleman was pleased to call it, which he would persuade gentlemen is not yet laid aside, I, for my part, assure this house, I am not so mad as ever again to engage in any thing that looks like an Excise; though in my own private opinion, I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation, and I am convinced that all the clamours without doors, and a great part of the opposition it met with every where, was founded upon artful falsehoods, misrepresentations, and insinuations, that such things were intended as had never entered into the thoughts of any man with whom I am acquainted." In consequence of this explicit declaration, the assertions of the contrary side made little impression on the house, and the question for referring the petition to a committee, was negatived by 233 against 155.*

The spirit of opposition was carried to such an excess, that the minority not only resisted every measure of government with unabating pertinacity, but brought forwards a question calculated to undermine and destroy the constitution which they affected so zealously to admire. In fact, this attempt had so direct a tendency to renew the military independance, which in the last century had subverted the throne, and enslaved the people, that even those writers who, in other respects, invariably decry the Walpole administration, have not scrupled to reprobate this pro-

* Chandler. Journals.

posal, though supported with all the strength of their favourite party.* The motion related to the removal of the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham from their military commands.

On the 13th of February, lord Morpeth, after the reading of the mutiny bill, rose, and concluded a speech full of trite reflections on a standing army, under the influence of the crown, on the danger of arbitrary power, and some inapplicable and erroneous allusions to the constitution of Holland and Sweden, by moving for leave to bring in a bill "for securing the constitution, by preventing officers, not above the rank of colonels of regiments, from being deprived of their commissions, otherwise than by judgment of a court martial, to be held for that purpose, or by address of either house of parliament."

This motion was argued at great length, and with uncommon warmth. But though ancient and modern history was ransacked, and every topic introduced which ingenuity could suggest, few observations worthy of record were produced. The minority were fully employed in defending their proposition against the charges with which it was overwhelmed by the ministerial advocates.

Walpole concluded the debate,† with a speech replete with sound principles and constitutional

* Smollett, book 2. chap. 5.—Belsham, vol. 1. p. 340.

† Lord Catherlogh said a few words after him, but they contained a simple dissent, unenforced by argument, expressive only of the obligations of the army to the movers of the question.

doctrines. He defended not only the prerogative of the crown, but the interest of parliament, and the well-being of the community, against the horrible despotism of a stratocracy, or army government. He vindicated the purity of court martials, and deprecated the evils which would result to the service, from subjecting them to the influence of intrigue, and making their decisions the mean of retaining or forfeiting a post for life. "The behaviour of an officer, he observed, may be influenced by malice, revenge, and faction, under the pretence of honour and conscience; and if ever any officer of the army, because the king refused to comply with some very unreasonable demand, should resolve to oppose in every thing the measures of government, I should think any man a most pitiful minister if he should be afraid of advising his majesty to cashier such an officer. On the contrary, I shall leave it as a legacy to all future ministers,* that upon every occasion, it is their duty to advise their master that such a man is unfit to have any command in his armies. Our king has, by his prerogative, a power of placing, preferring, and removing any officer he pleases, either in our army or militia. It is by that prerogative chiefly, he is enabled to execute our laws, and preserve the peace of the kingdom. If a wrong use be made of that prerogative, his ministers are accountable for it to parliament; but it cannot be taken from him, or diminished, without over-

* Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 105. These words are erroneously attributed to Mr. Pelham, by Chandler.

turning our constitution; for our present happy constitution may be overturned by republican, as well as by arbitrary schemes. Therefore it must be left to his majesty to judge by what motives an officer acts, and if he thinks an officer acts from bad motives, in duty to himself, he ought to remove him." He then expatiated on the danger of a dictatorship from the measure proposed, and concluded with the constitutional apothegm:

"*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*"

The question was negatived without a division.*

Foiled in this attempt, the opposition renewed the attack, on a ground more plausible and popular, that of personal inquiry. Sandys moved for an address, "humbly to desire his majesty, graciously to inform the house, by whose advice he had been pleased to discharge the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham, and what crimes were alleged against them." Pulteney seconded the motion. The ministry discerning the views of their opponents, and knowing that to discuss the question would produce the same effect as pleading to a specific charge, by letting loose on them all the powers of invective, and all the arts of misrepresentation, declined the contest. They made no reply, but called for the question. Sir William Wyndham in vain attempted, by reproaches and invectives, to provoke a debate; the question was again called for, and on a division, negatived by 252 against 193.†

On the same day the duke of Marlborough

* Chandler. Journals. † Journals.

brought into the house of lords a bill similar to that in the commons, but it was thrown out after the first reading. A motion to the same purport as that of Sandys was made by lord Carteret, but rejected. Protests on both occasions were entered on the journals, signed by upwards of thirty peers, and the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham separately signed a short and manly protest.

Another measure of opposition, calculated to render themselves popular was, to revive a self-denying ordinance, which had excited much clamour in the reign of king William, and, after great opposition, had formed an article among the limitations in the act of settlement, but had been afterwards repealed. It was intituled a bill for securing the freedom of parliament, by limiting the number of officers (both civil and military) in the house of commons. Several friends of the minister were strongly inclined to favour the bill, and others could not venture to oppose so popular a question at the eve of a general election.

Many of those who supported the bill used the most violent and intemperate language, representing the House of Commons as corrupted by places and pensions, and to show their subserviency to government, they employed the coarse allusion, that the minister held the House of Commons, and even the House of Lords in his pocket.

To these invectives Walpole replied in a tone of moderation calculated not to offend his

Whig adherents, or to inflame the spirit of party. He dwelt principally on the number of placemen who had voted for the bill as a sufficient proof of its inutility; and as a complete evidence that pensions or places did not bias the integrity of those by whom they were held.

This plain appeal to the good sense and feeling of the House was not without its effect, and the bill was accordingly thrown out by a greater majority than was expected, namely 230 against 191.*

But the question on which the opposition founded their principal hopes, if not of success at least of embarrassing the minister, was a proposal to repeal the septennial bill, which was first introduced on this occasion, and afterwards annually renewed.

It had been long a matter of surprise, that a question so well calculated to increase their popularity, had not been proposed before. But the fact was, that in this particular instance the members of the opposition were divided. The Tories and Jacobites, who had strenuously resisted its introduction, could not obtain the co-operation of the disaffected Whigs; as it seemed to imply a dereliction of their principles, to vote for the repeal of a bill which they had

* In the former editions of this work, I erroneously asserted that the minister did not speak in the debate. I am happy to correct this error into which I was led by Chandler, who did not introduce the latter part of the debate; and to express my acknowledgments to Mr. Hansard, who has inserted the whole in his Parliamentary History, vol. 9, p. 388-9.

once thought necessary for the security of the Protestant succession. At the repeated instigations of Bolingbroke, Sir William Wyndham and the leading Tories persisted, and at length carried their point. The Whigs reluctantly complied; and proved, by their manner of conducting the debate, the awkward situation in which they were placed. The motion was made by Bromley, March 13, and seconded by Sir John St. Aubin. The only Whigs of any consequence who spoke for the question, were Sir John Barnard, who said only a few words, and Pulteney, who rose late in the debate. He made a short speech, and prefaced it with an apology for his apparent inconsistency, in voting for the repeal of a bill which he had supported at the time of its introduction.

The speech of Sir William Wyndham on this occasion, is triumphantly quoted by the modern writers, who uniformly stigmatise the Walpole administration, as a master-piece of eloquence and energy; they state his arguments as unanswerable. At the same time these partial reporters never advert to the reply of Sir Robert Walpole, but leave the reader to suppose that scarcely any answer was made, and that the whole strength of the argument lay on the side of opposition.

To abridge or detail printed debates, without illustrating them by any new documents, is not the general purport of this work. But on this occasion, where there has been such a wilful suppression of the argument on one side, and

such an affected display of the reasoning on the other, it will be almost as great a novelty to give the speech of the minister, as if it had never been in print. I have therefore inserted the philippic of Sir William Wyndham, and Walpole's reply, verbatim, from contemporary narratives.*

After a short reply to Sir William Yonge, who preceded him, and justifying the assertions of Sir John Barnard, who spoke in favour of the motion, Sir William Wyndham vindicated the triennial bill from the objections of those who declared that it was introduced by the enemies of the revolution. He added, "The learned gentleman has told us, that the septennial law is a proper medium between the unlimited power of the crown, and limiting that power too much; but before he had fixed upon this as a medium, he should first have discovered to us the two extremes. I will readily allow, that an unlimited power in the crown, with respect to the continuing of parliaments, is one extreme; but the other I cannot really find out; for I am very far from thinking, that the power of the crown was too much limited by the triennial law, or that the happiness of the nation was any way injured by it, or can ever be injured by frequent elections. As to the power of the crown, it is very certain, that as long as the administration of public affairs is agreeable to the generality of the people, were they to choose a new parliament

* Political State of Great Britain.—Historical Register.—See also Chandler.

every year, they would choose such representatives as would most heartily concur in every thing with such an administration. So that even an annual parliament could not be any limitation of the just power of the crown; and as to the happiness of the nation, it is certain, that gentlemen will always contend with more heat and animosity about being members of a long parliament, than about being members of a short one; therefore the elections for a septennial parliament must always disturb the peace, and injure the happiness of the nation, more than the elections for an annual or triennial parliament. Of this the elections in the city of London, mentioned by my worthy friend, are an evident demonstration.

"As to the elections coming on when the nation is in a ferment, it is so far from being an objection to frequent elections, that it is, in my opinion, a strong argument in favour of them; because it is one of the chief supports of the national freedom. It is plain, that the people seldom or never were in a ferment, but when encroachments were made upon their rights and privileges; and when any such are made, it is very proper, nay, it is even necessary, that the people should be allowed to proceed to a new election, that they may choose such representatives as will do them justice, by punishing those who have been making encroachments upon them. Otherwise, one of these two effects may very probably ensue. Either the ferment will break out into an open insurrection, or the

encroachment that has been made, may happen to be forgot before a new election comes on, and then the invaders of the people's rights will have a much better lay for getting such a new parliament chosen, as will not only free them from all punishment, but will confirm the encroachments that have been made, and encourage new. Thus the rights of the people may be nibbled and curtailed piecemeal, and ambitious criminals may at last get themselves so firmly seated, that it will be out of the power of the people to stop their career, or to avoid the chains which they are preparing.

"Now, to return to the power of the crown, which the learned gentleman has told us was too much limited by the triennial law; I think I have made it plain, that the just power of the crown cannot possibly be limited by frequent elections, and consequently could not be too much limited by the triennial law. But by long parliaments the crown may be enabled to assume, and to make use of an unjust power. By our constitution, the only legal method we have of vindicating our rights and privileges against the encroachments of ambitious ministers, is by parliament; the only way we have of rectifying a weak or wicked administration is by parliament; the only effectual way we have of bringing high and powerful criminals to condign punishment, is by parliament. But if ever it should come to be in the power of the administration to have a majority of this house depending upon the crown, or to get a majority of such

men returned as the representatives of the people, the parliament will then stand us in no stead. It can answer none of these great purposes. The whole nation may be convinced of the weakness or the wickedness of those in the administration, and yet it may be out of the nation's power, in a legal way, to get the fools turned out, or the knaves hanged.

"This misfortune can be brought upon us by nothing but by bribery and corruption; and therefore there is nothing we ought to guard more watchfully against. And an honourable gentleman who spoke some time ago, upon the same side with me, has so clearly demonstrated, that the elections for a septennial parliament are more liable to be influenced by corruption than those for a triennial, that I am surprised his argument should be mistaken or not comprehended; but it seems the most certain maxims, the plainest truths, are now to be controverted or denied. It has been laid down as a maxim, and I think it is a most infallible maxim, that a man will contend with more heat and vigour, for a post, either of honour or profit, which he is to hold for a long term, than for one he is to hold for a short term. This has been controverted: it has been laid down as a maxim, and I think equally infallible, that 100 guineas is a more powerful bribe than 50; this has been denied; yet nevertheless I must beg leave to push the argument a little farther.

"Let us suppose a gentleman at the head of the administration, whose only safety depends

upon corrupting the members of this house. This may now be only a supposition. But it is certainly such a one as may happen; and if ever it should, let us see if such a minister might not promise himself more success in a septennial, than he could in a triennial parliament. It is an old maxim, that every man has his price, if you can but come up to it. This, I hope, does not hold true of every man, but I am afraid it too generally holds true; and that of a great many it may hold true, is what I believe was never doubted of, though I don't know but it may now likewise be denied. However, let us suppose this distressed minister applying to one of those men who has a price, and is a member of this house. In order to engage this member to vote as he shall direct him, he offers him a pension of £.1,000 a year. If it be but a triennial parliament, will not the member immediately consider within himself, if I accept of this pension, and vote according to direction, I shall lose my character in the country, I shall lose my seat in parliament the next election, and my pension will then of course be at an end; so that by turning rogue I shall get but £,3,000, this is not worth my while; and so the minister must either offer him, perhaps double that sum, or otherwise he will probably determine against being corrupted. But if the parliament were septennial, the same man might perhaps say within himself, I am now in for seven years, by accepting of this pension I shall have at least £.7,000, this will set me above contempt; and if I am

turned out at next election, I do not value it, I'll take the money in the mean time. Is it not very natural to suppose all this; and does not this evidently show, that a wicked minister cannot corrupt a triennial parliament with the same money with which he may corrupt a septennial?

"Again, suppose this minister applies to a gentleman who has purchased, and thereby made himself member for a borough, at the rate of, perhaps, £.1,500, besides travelling charges, and other little expenses. Suppose the minister offers him a pension of £.500 a year to engage his vote, will not he naturally consider, if it be a triennial parliament, that if he cannot get a higher pension he will lose money by being a member; and surely, if it be a right burgess, he will resolve not to sell at all, rather than sell his commodity for less than it cost him; and if he finds he cannot sell at all, he will probably give over standing a candidate again upon such a footing; by which, not only he, but many others, will be induced to give over dealing in corrupting the electors at the next election. But in case it be a septennial parliament, will he not then probably accept of the £. 500 pension, if he be one of those men that has a price? because he concludes that for £.1,500, he may always secure his election; and every parliament will put near £.2,000 in his pocket, besides reimbursing him all his charges. After viewing the present question in this light, is it possible not to conclude, that septennial parlia-

ments, as well as the elections for such, must always be much more liable to be influenced by corruption than triennial, or elections for triennial.

"For my own part, I have been often chosen, I have sat in parliament above these twenty years, and I can say with truth, that neither at my election, nor after my return, no man ever dared to attempt to let me know, what is meant by bribery and corruption. But I am sorry to hear the impossibility of preventing it, mentioned, and mentioned too within these walls. The honourable gentleman who spoke last, told us, the evil of corruption was inevitable. If I were so unhappy as to think so, I should look upon my country to be in the most melancholy situation. Perhaps it may be the way of thinking among those he keeps company with; but I thank God I have a better opinion of my countrymen. And since it appears to be a way of thinking among some gentlemen, it is high time for us to contrive some method of putting it out of their power to corrupt the virtue of the people. For we may depend upon this as a certain maxim, that those who think they cannot gain the affections of the people, will endeavour to purchase their prostitution; and the best way to prevent the success of their endeavours is, to raise the price so high, as to put it out of the power of any man, or of any set of men, to come up to it. If a parliament is to be purchased, if elections are to be purchased, it is manifest the corrupting of triennial must, upon the whole, cost a great deal more

than the corrupting of septennial elections or parliaments. Therefore, in order to put it out of the power of any man, or of any administration, to purchase the prostitution of a parliament, or of the people, let us return to triennial parliaments; and if that will not do, let us return to annual elections, which, I am very certain, would render the practice of corruption impossible. This is now the more necessary, because of the many new posts and places of profit which the crown has at its disposal, and the great civil list settled upon his present majesty, and which will probably be continued to his successors. This, I say, urges the necessity for frequent new parliaments, because the crown has it now more in their power than formerly to seduce the people, or the representatives of the people, in case any future administration should find it necessary for their own safety to do so.

"That the increase or decrease of corruption at elections, or in parliament, must always depend upon the increase or decrease of virtue among the people, I shall readily grant; but it is as certain, that the virtue of almost every particular man, depends upon the temptations that are thrown in his way; and according to the quantity of virtue he has, the quantity of the temptation must be raised, so as at last to make it an over-balance for his virtue. Suppose, then, that the generality of the electors in England had virtue enough to withstand a

temptation of five guineas each, but not virtue enough to withstand a temptation of ten guineas, one with another. Is it not then much more probable, that the gentlemen who deal in corruption, may be able to raise as much money once every seven years, as will be sufficient to give ten guineas each, one with another, to the generality of the electors, than that they will be able to raise such a sum once in every three years? And is it not from thence certain, that the virtue of the people, in general, is in greater danger of being destroyed, by septennial than by triennial parliaments? To suppose that every man's vote at an election, is like a commodity, which must be sold at the market price, is really to suppose that no man has any virtue at all. For I will aver, that when once a man resolves to sell his vote at any rate, he has then no virtue left, which, I hope, is not the case of many of our electors, and therefore the only thing we are to apprehend is, lest so high a price should be offered, as may tempt thousands to sell, who had never before any thoughts of carrying such a commodity to market. This is the fatal event we are to dread, and it is much more to be dreaded from septennial than triennial parliaments. If we have therefore any desire to preserve the virtue of our people; if we have any desire to preserve our constitution; if we have any desire to preserve our liberties, our properties, and every thing that can be dear to a free people, we ought to restore the triennial law;

and if that be found to be insignificant, we ought to abolish prorogations, and return to annual elections.

"The learned gentleman spoke of the prerogative of the crown, and asked, if it had lately been extended beyond those bounds prescribed to it by law? I will not say that there has been lately any attempt to extend it beyond the bounds prescribed by law; but I will say, those bounds have been of late so vastly enlarged, that there seems to be no great occasion for any such attempt. What are the many penal laws made within these forty years, but so many extensions of the prerogative of the crown, and as many diminutions of the liberty of the subject? And whatever the necessity was that brought us into the enactment of such laws, it was a fatal necessity. It has greatly added to the power of the crown, and particular care ought to be taken not to throw any more weight into that scale. Perhaps the enacting of several of those penal laws might have been avoided; I am persuaded the enactment of the law relating to trials for treason, not only might, but ought to have been avoided; for, though it was but a temporary law, it was a dangerous precedent; and the rebellion was far from being so general in any county, as not to leave a sufficient number of faithful subjects for trying those who had committed acts of treason within the county.

"In former times the crown had a large estate of its own; an estate sufficient for supporting the dignity of the crown; and as we had no standing

armies, nor any great fleets to provide for, the crown did not want frequent supplies; so that they were not under any necessity of calling frequent parliaments. And as parliaments were always troublesome, often dangerous to ministers, therefore they avoided the calling of any such as much as possible. But though the crown did not then want frequent supplies, the people frequently wanted a redress of grievances, which could not be obtained but by parliament; therefore the only complaint then was, that the crown either did not call any parliament at all, or did not allow them to sit long enough. This was the only complaint; and to remedy this, it was thought sufficient to provide for having frequent parliaments, every one of which, it was presumed, was always to be a new parliament; for it is well known, that the method of prorogation was of old very rarely made use of, and was first introduced by those who were attempting to make encroachments upon the rights of the people.

"But now the case is altered. The crown, either by ill management, or by prodigality and profuseness to favourites, has spent or granted away all that estate; and the public expense is so much enlarged, that the crown must have annual supplies, and therefore the parliament must meet every year. But as new elections are always dangerous, as well as troublesome to ministers of state, they are for having them as seldom as possible; so that the complaint is not now for want of frequent meetings or sessions

of parliament, but against having the same parliament continued too long. This is the grievance now complained of; this is what the people desire; this is what they have a right to have redressed. The members of parliament may for one year be looked on as the real and true representatives of the people. But when a minister has seven years to practise on them, and to feel their pulses, they may be induced to forget whose representatives they are; they may throw off all dependence upon their electors, and may become dependents upon the crown, or rather upon the minister, for the time being, which the learned gentleman has most ingeniously confessed to us, he thinks less dangerous than a dependence upon his electors.

"We have been told in this house, that no faith is to be given to prophesies, therefore I shall not pretend to prophesy; but I may suppose a case, which, though it has not yet happened, may possibly happen. Let us then suppose a man abandoned to all notions of virtue or honour, of no great family, and of but a mean fortune, raised to be chief minister of state, by the concurrence of many whimsical events; afraid or unwilling to trust any but creatures of his own making, and most of them equally abandoned to all notions of virtue and honour; ignorant of the true interest of his country, and consulting nothing but that of enriching and aggrandizing himself and his favourites; in foreign affairs trusting none but those whose education makes it impossible for them to have

such knowledge, or such qualifications as can either be of service to their country, or give any weight or credit to their negotiations. Let us suppose the true interest of the nation by such means neglected or misunderstood, her honour and credit lost, her trade insulted, her merchants plundered, and her sailors murdered; and all these things overlooked, only for fear his administration should be endangered. Suppose him next possessed of great wealth, the plunder of the nation, with a parliament of his own choosing, most of their seats purchased, and their votes bought at the expense of the public treasure. In such a parliament, let us suppose attempts made to inquire into his conduct, or to relieve the nation from the distress he has brought upon it; and when lights proper for attaining those ends are called for, not perhaps for the information of the particular gentlemen who call for them, but because nothing can be done in a parliamentary way, until these things be in a proper way laid before parliament. Suppose these lights refused, these reasonable requests rejected by a corrupt majority of his creatures, whom he retains in daily pay, or engages in his particular interest, by granting them those posts and places, which ought never to be given to any but for the good of the public. Upon this scandalous victory, let us suppose this chief minister pluming himself in defiances, because he finds he has got a parliament, like a packed jury, ready to acquit him at all adventures. Let us farther suppose him

arrived to that degree of insolence and arrogance, as to domineer over all the men of ancient families; all the men of sense, figure, or fortune in the nation; and as he has no virtue of his own, ridiculing it in others, and endeavouring to destroy or corrupt it in all.

"I am still not prophesying, I am only supposing; and the case I am going to suppose, I hope will never happen. But with such a minister, and such a parliament, let us suppose a prince upon the throne, either for want of true information, or for some other reason, ignorant and unacquainted with the inclinations and the interest of his people, weak, and hurried away by unbounded ambition, and insatiable avarice. This case has never happened in this nation; I hope, I say, it will never exist. But as it is possible it may, could there any greater curse happen to a nation, than such a prince on the throne, advised, and solely advised by such a minister, and that minister supported by such a parliament. The nature of mankind cannot be altered by human laws. The existence of such a prince, or such a minister, we cannot prevent by act of parliament; but the existence of such a parliament I think we may; and as such a parliament is much more likely to exist, and may do more mischief while the septennial law remains in force, than if it were repealed, therefore I am most heartily for the repeal of it."

After a short speech from Henry Pelham, and another from Pulteney, Sir Robert Walpole thus addressed the chair:

"Sir, I do assure you, I did not intend to have troubled you in this debate; but such incidents now generally happen towards the end of our debates, nothing at all relating to the subject, and gentlemen make such suppositions, meaning some person, or perhaps, as they say, no person now in being, and talk so much of wicked ministers, domineering ministers, ministers pluming themselves in defiances, which terms, and such like, have been of late so much made use of in this house, that if they really mean no body either in the house or out of it, yet it must be supposed they at least mean to call upon some gentleman in this house to make them a reply: I hope, therefore, I may be allowed to draw a picture in my turn; and I may likewise say, that I do not mean to give a description of any particular person now in being. When gentlemen talk of ministers abandoned to all sense of virtue or honour, other gentlemen may, I am sure, with equal justice, and, I think, more justly, speak of anti-ministers and mock-patriots, who never had either virtue or honour, but in the whole course of their opposition are actuated only by motives of envy, and of resentment against those who have disappointed them in their views, or may not perhaps have complied with all their desires.

"But now, Sir, let me too suppose, and the house being cleared, I am sure no person that hears me can come within the description of the person I am to suppose. Let us suppose in this, or in some other unfortunate country, an anti-

minister,* who thinks himself a person of so great and extensive parts, and of so many eminent qualifications, that he looks upon himself as the only person in the kingdom capable to conduct the public affairs of the nation, and therefore christening every other gentleman who has the honour to be employed in the administration, by the name of Blunderer. Suppose this fine gentleman lucky enough to have gained over to his party some persons really of fine parts, of ancient families, and of great fortunes, and others of desperate views, arising from disappointed and malicious hearts; all these gentlemen, with respect to their political behaviour, moved by him, and by him solely; all they say, either in private or public, being only a repetition of the words he has put into their mouths, and a spitting out that venom which he has infused into them; and yet we may suppose this leader not really liked by any, even of those who so blindly follow him, and hated by all the rest of mankind. We will suppose this anti-minister to be in a country, where he really ought not to be, and where he could not have been, but by an effect of too much goodness and mercy; yet endeavouring, with all his might and with all his art, to destroy the fountain from whence that mercy flowed. In that country suppose him continually contracting friendships and familiarities with the embassadors of those princes who at the time are most at enmity with his own; and if at any time it should

* Meaning lord Bolingbroke.

happen to be for the interest of any of those foreign ministers to have a secret divulged to them, which might be highly prejudicial to his native country, as well as to all its friends; suppose this foreign minister applying to him, and he answering, I will get it you, tell me but what you want, I will endeavour to procure it for you. Upon this he puts a speech or two in the mouths of some of his creatures, or some of his new converts. What he wants is moved for in parliament, and when so very reasonable a request as this is refused, suppose him and his creatures and tools, by his advice, spreading the alarm over the whole nation, and crying out, gentlemen, our country is at present involved in many dangerous difficulties, all which we would have extricated you from, but a wicked minister and a corrupt majority refused us the proper materials; and upon this scandalous victory, this minister became so insolent as to plume himself in defiances. Let us farther suppose this anti-minister to have travelled, and at every court where he was, thinking himself the greatest minister, and making it his trade to betray the secrets of every court where he had before been; void of all faith or honour, and betraying every master he ever served. I could carry my suppositions a great deal farther, and I may say I mean no person now in being; but if we can suppose such a one, can there be imagined a greater disgrace to human nature than such a wretch as this?

"Now, to be serious, and to talk really to the

subject in hand. Though the question has been already so fully and so handsomely opposed by my worthy friend under the gallery, by the learned gentleman near me, and by several others, that there is no great occasion to say any thing farther against it; yet as some new matter has been stated by some of the gentlemen who have since that time spoke upon the other side of the question, I hope the house will indulge me in the liberty of giving some of those reasons which induce me to be against the motion. In general I must take notice, that the nature of our constitution seems to be very much mistaken by the gentlemen who have spoken in favour of this motion. It is certain, that our's is a mixed government, and the perfection of our constitution consists in this, that the monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical forms are mixed and interwoven in our's, so as to give us all the advantages of each, without subjecting us to the dangers and inconveniences of either. The democratical form of government, which is the only one I have now occasion to notice, is liable to these inconveniences, that they are generally too tedious in coming to any resolution, and seldom brisk and expeditious enough in carrying their resolutions into execution. That they are always wavering in their resolutions, and never steady in any of the measures they resolve to pursue; and that they are often involved in factions, seditions, and insurrections, which exposes them to be made the tools, if not the prey of their neighbours. Therefore in all

the regulations we make, with respect to our constitution, we are to guard against running too much into that form of government which is properly called democratical. This was, in my opinion, the effect of the triennial law, and will again be the effect, if ever it should be restored.

"That triennial elections would make our government too tedious in all their resolves is evident; because, in such case, no prudent administration would ever resolve upon any measure of consequence, till they had felt not only the pulse of the parliament, but the pulse of the people; and the ministers of state would always labour under this disadvantage, that as secrets of state must not be immediately divulged, their enemies (and enemies they will always have) would have a handle for exposing their measures, rendering them disagreeable to the people, and thereby carrying perhaps a new election against them, before they could have an opportunity of justifying their measures, by divulging those facts and circumstances from whence the justice and the wisdom of those measures would clearly appear.

"Then it is by experience well known, that what is called the populace of every country, are apt to be too much elated with success, and too much dejected with every misfortune. This makes them wavering in their opinions, about affairs of state, and never long of the same mind; and as this house is chosen by the free and unbiassed voice of the people in general, if this

choice were so often renewed, we might expect, that this house would be as wavering and as unsteady as the people usually are. And it being impossible to carry on the public affairs of the nation without the concurrence of this house, the ministers would always be obliged to comply, and consequently would be obliged to change their measures, as often as the people changed their minds.

"With septennial parliaments we are not exposed to either of these misfortunes; because, if the ministers, after having felt the pulse of the parliament, which they can always soon do, resolve upon any measures, they have generally time enough before the new election comes on, to give the people a proper information, in order to show them the justice and the wisdom of the measures they have pursued. And if the people should at any time be too much elated, or too much dejected, or should without a cause change their minds, those at the helm of affairs have time to set them right, before a new election comes on.

"As to faction and sedition, I will grant, that in monarchical and aristocratical governments, it generally arises from violence and oppression; but in democratical governments, it always arises from the people's having too great a share in the government. For in all countries, and in all governments, there always will be many factious and unquiet spirits, who can never be at rest, either in power or out of power. When in power they are never easy, unless every man submits

entirely to their direction; when out of power, they are always working and intriguing against those that are in, without any regard to justice, or to the interest of their country. In popular governments such men have too much game, they have too many opportunities for working upon and corrupting the minds of the people, in order to give them a bad impression of, and to raise discontents against those that have the management of public affairs for the time; and these discontents often break out into seditions and insurrections. This would, in my opinion, be our misfortune, if our parliaments were either annual or triennial. By such frequent elections, so much power would be thrown into the hands of the people, as would destroy that equal mixture, which is the beauty of our constitution. In short, our government would really become a democratical government, and might from thence very probably diverge into a tyrannical. Therefore, in order to preserve our constitution, in order to prevent our falling under tyranny and arbitrary power, we ought to preserve that law, which I really think has brought our constitution to a more equal mixture, and consequently to a greater perfection, than it was ever in before that law took place.

"As to bribery and corruption, if it were possible to influence, by such base means, the majority of the electors of Great Britain, to choose such men as would probably give up their liberties; if it were possible to influence, by such means, a majority of the members of this house to

consent to the establishment of arbitrary power. I should readily allow, that the calculations made by the gentlemen of the other side were just, and their inference true. But I am persuaded that neither of these is possible. As the members of this house generally are, and must always be gentlemen of fortune and figure in their country, is it possible to suppose, that any of them could by a pension or a post be influenced to consent to the overthrow of our constitution, by which the enjoyment, not only of what he got, but of what he before had, would be rendered altogether precarious? I will allow, that with respect to bribery, the price must be higher or lower, generally in proportion to the virtue of the man who is to be bribed; but it must likewise be granted, that the humour he happens to be in at the time, and the spirit he happens to be endowed with, adds a great deal to his virtue. When no encroachments are made upon the rights of the people, when the people do not think themselves in any danger, there may be many of the electors, who, by a bribe of ten guineas, might be induced to vote for one candidate rather than another. But if the court were making any encroachment upon the rights of the people, a proper spirit would, without doubt, arise in the nation; and in such a case I am persuaded that none, or very few, even of such electors, could be induced to vote for a court candidate; no not for ten times the sum.

"There may be some bribery and corruption

in the nation; I am afraid there will always be some. But it is no proof of it that strangers are sometimes chosen; for a gentleman may have so much natural influence over a borough in his neighbourhood, as to be able to prevail with them to choose any person he pleases to recommend. And if upon such recommendation they choose one or two of his friends, who are perhaps strangers to them, it is not from thence to be inferred, that the two strangers were chosen their representatives by the means of bribery and corruption.

"To insinuate that money may be issued from the public treasury for bribing elections, is really something very extraordinary, especially in those gentlemen who know how many checks are upon every shilling that can be issued from thence; and how regularly the money granted in one year for the service of the nation, must always be accounted for the very next sessions in this house, and likewise in the other, if they have a mind to call for any such account. And as to gentlemen in offices, if they have any advantage over country gentlemen, in having something else to depend on besides their own private fortunes, they have likewise many disadvantages. They are obliged to live here at London with their families, by which they are put to a much greater expense, than gentlemen of equal fortune, who live in the country. This lays them under a very great disadvantage in supporting their interest in the country. The country gentleman, by living among the electors, and

purchasing the necessaries for his family from them, keeps up an acquaintance and correspondence with them, without putting himself to any extraordinary charge. Whereas a gentleman who lives in London, has no other way of keeping up an acquaintance and correspondence among his friends in the country, but by going down once or twice a year, at a very extraordinary expense, and often without any other business. So that we may conclude, a gentleman in office cannot, even in seven years, save much for distributing in ready money, at the time of an election; and I really believe, if the fact were narrowly inquired into, it would appear, that the gentlemen in office are as little guilty of bribing their electors with ready money, as any other set of gentlemen in the kingdom.

"That ferments are often raised among the people without any just cause, is what I am surprised to hear controverted, since very late experience may convince us of the contrary. Do not we know what a ferment was raised in the nation towards the latter end of the late queen's reign? And it is well known what a fatal change in the affairs of this nation was introduced, or at least confirmed, by an election coming on while the nation was in that ferment. Do not we know what a ferment was raised in the nation soon after his late majesty's accession? And if an election had then been allowed to come on, while the nation was in that ferment, it might perhaps have had as fatal effects as the former. But, thank God, this was wisely provided against by

the very law which is now wanted to be repealed.

"It has, indeed, been said, that the chief motive for enacting that law, now no longer exists. I cannot admit that the motive they mean was the chief motive; but even that motive is very far from having entirely ceased. Can gentlemen imagine, that in the spirit raised in the nation not above a twelvemonth since, Jacobitism and disaffection to the present government had no share? Perhaps some who might wish well to the present establishment did co-operate, nay, I do not know but they were the first movers of that spirit. But it cannot be supposed that the spirit then raised should have grown up to such a ferment, merely from a proposition which was honestly and fairly laid before the parliament, and left entirely to their determination! No, the spirit was, perhaps, begun by those who are truly friends to the illustrious family we have now upon the throne; but it was raised to a much greater height than, I believe, even they designed, by Jacobites, and such as are enemies to our present establishment, who thought they never had a fairer opportunity of bringing about what they have so long and so unsuccessfully wished for, than that which had been furnished them by those who first raised that spirit. I hope the people have now in a great measure come to themselves; and therefore I doubt not but the next elections will show, that when they are left to judge coolly, they can distinguish between the real, and the pretended friends to the

government. But I must say, if the ferment then raised in the nation had not already greatly subsided, I should have thought a new election a very dangerous experiment; and as such ferments may hereafter often happen, I must think that frequent elections will always be dangerous. For which reason, in so far as I can see at present, I shall, I believe, at all times think it a very dangerous experiment to repeal the septennial bill."

It is impossible at this distance of time to appreciate exactly the effect of the minister's speech; but a contemporary writer * asserts, that it was one of the best he ever made. The fate of these two speeches is singular. Sir William Wyndham, by his disrespectful allusions to the king, drew on himself a reproof, the justice of which neither himself nor his friends have endeavoured to disprove. It was considered as an intemperate effusion, and did not lose the minister a single supporter in parliament, or a single adherent in the country; yet it has been carefully inserted by party writers, calling themselves historians, while that of the minister has been no less invidiously suppressed.

The speech of Walpole, as far as it relates to that personality which seems to be the recommending characteristic of the other, has certainly less claim to be recorded, because the character and situation of Bolingbroke, contrasted with his own, are less able to give permanence and publicity to invective. The faults of an ex-

* Tindal.

minister, or aspiring leader of a party, are less interesting, to the community, than those of the man who holds the reins of government. But the immediate result of Walpole's unpremeditated reply to this studied attack, was a sense of shame in the opposition Whigs, and of indignation in the principal Tories, which interrupted their cordial union. Several Whigs re-united themselves to the minister; and the leading Tories, ashamed of appearing the puppets of Bolingbroke, though they continued to thwart and oppose the measures of government, did not, of themselves, bring forward any new question during the remainder of the session.

It may not perhaps be improper in this place to observe, that the sensation which Walpole's speech made in the house of commons, and the effect which it produced out of doors, in developing the intrigues of Bolingbroke with the opposition in England, and of laying open his cabals with foreign courts and ministers, were the immediate cause, that he quitted this country, and retired to France. Pulteney, who saw and appreciated the fatal consequences of his unpopularity among the Whigs, to which party he himself was always cordially attached, bitterly complained that Sir William Wyndham received his dictates too implicitly. With a view therefore to remove this stigma from opposition, he recommended to him a temporary retirement from England. Bolingbroke was extremely mortified, that all his repeated professions of honour, virtue, and disinterestedness, did not

gain credit. He found himself reduced to the most wretched situation which an aspiring mind like his could suffer, that of being excluded from a share in the legislature, and heading a party in continued opposition, without the smallest hopes of ever being restored to his seat in the house of lords. In his letters to Sir William Wyndham, he feelingly describes his own situation, "I am still," he says, "the same proscribed man, surrounded with difficulties, exposed to mortifications, and unable to take any share in the service, but that which I have taken hitherto, and which, I think, you would not persuade me to take in the present state of things. My part is over, and he who remains on the stage after his part is over, deserves to be hissed off."*

In consequence of these sentiments, he waited until the meeting of the new parliament, when a large majority still supporting the minister, during whose continuance in power he had no chance of obtaining a complete restoration, he followed the advice of Pulteney, and retired in disgust to France.

The adversaries of the minister had taken advantage of the inflamed state of the public mind, to circulate reports, both in their speeches and writings, that the liberties of the subject were in danger, and that he had planned a regular system of oppression, which, if not resisted, would erect a despotic and arbitrary power on the ruins of the British constitution.

* Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, Paris, November 29, 1735.—Correspondence, Period III. Article Bolingbroke.

The speech which Walpole composed for the king, on the dissolution of the parliament, April 16, was calculated to counteract these reports, and to conciliate the public. It was full of sentiments which none but a free nation could understand and appreciate; sentiments which do honour to the minister who composed it, to the king who uttered it, to the parliament who heard it, and to the people by whom it was applauded.

"The prosperity and glory of my reign depend upon the affections and happiness of my people, and the happiness of my people upon my preserving to them all the legal rights and privileges, as established under the present settlement of the crown in the Protestant line. A due execution and strict observance of the laws, are the best and only securities both to sovereign and subject: their interest is mutual and inseparable, and therefore their endeavours for the support of each other ought to be equal and reciprocal. Any infringement or encroachment upon the rights of either is a diminution of the strength of both, which, kept within their due bounds and limits, make that just balance, which is necessary for the honour and dignity of the crown, and for the protection and prosperity of the people. What depends upon me, shall, on my part, be religiously kept and observed, and I make no doubt of receiving the just returns of duty and gratitude from them."*

* Chandler, vol. 8. p. 248. Journals.

CHAPTER 43.

1733—1734.

View of Foreign Transactions from the Death of Augustus the Second to the Dissolution of Parliament—Election of Stanislaus, and a Counter-Election of Augustus—Successful Hostilities of France, Spain, and Sardinia, against the Emperor—Neutrality of the Dutch—Causes which induced England to reject the Application of the Emperor for Succours.

IF any man ever deserved the appellation of minister of peace, that man was Sir Robert Walpole. The foreign transactions of this eventful period will sufficiently verify that assertion. Yet it cannot be denied, that peace itself may be dearly purchased, by the dereliction of national honour, by the breach of treaties, by permitting the loss of dominions, to those whom it is our interest to support, and the aggrandisement of those whom it is our interest to depress. And it must be confessed, that if any censure can be justly thrown on the pacific system adopted by Walpole, it must be thrown on the inactivity of England at this critical juncture; in her refusal to assist the Emperor against the united arms of France, Spain, and Sardinia; in suffering the Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon to wrest from the house of Austria, Naples, and Sicily;

and, what was still more hostile to the interests of Great Britain, in permitting the accession of Loraine and Bar to France. For if it be allowed, that any merit is due for preserving this country and Europe from a general war, that merit is due to Walpole; so, on the other hand, it cannot be denied, that if any blame can be imputed to the cabinet for tameness and pusillanimity, that blame must also attach solely to him; as he alone stood forth in opposition to the king and part of the cabinet; and by refusing to assist the Emperor, maintained his country in peace.

I shall confine myself at present to a brief deduction of the facts and negotiations which preceded and followed the death of Augustus the Second, interspersed with such observations as may tend to elucidate his conduct, and display the motives that induced the minister of finance to abstain from entering into offensive operations against France, and suffer the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon, and the depression of the house of Austria, which proved afterwards so fatal to the interest of England, and of which we yet experience the evil effects. In making this deduction, it is not my intention either to censure or to commend, but simply to state the sum and substance of the motives which the papers in my possession have enabled me to assign for his conduct.

For a term of twenty years, Europe had enjoyed an unexampled state of tranquillity, only broken by petty hostilities between Spain and England. This tranquillity had been owing to

the temporary separation between France and Spain, to the reciprocal interests of France and England in the maintenance of peace, and to the good intelligence between the two cabinets.

But the reconciliation between France and Spain, and the re-union of England and Austria, by the treaty of Vienna, had scarcely taken place, before the jealousy between the two nations, began to revive. Their counsels were no longer guided by the same mutual good will and harmony. The efforts to give a king to Poland, on the death of Augustus the Second, which took place on the 1st of February, 1733, the indignation of Elizabeth Farnese against the Emperor, for having deceived her in not accomplishing the marriage between her son, Don Carlos, and an archduchess, and the disputes which arose concerning the succession of Tuscany and Parma, kindled a war between the houses of Austria and Bourbon, which would have become general, had not Walpole prevented the diffusion of hostilities.

The death * of Augustus the Second being

* The substance of this chapter is taken from the dispatches of Horace Walpole, lord Harrington, the duke of Newcastle, and Thomas Robinson; Walpole, Orford, and Grantham Papers. Also from several papers drawn up by Horace Walpole, particularly, "Reflections on the present state of affairs, October 8, 1733."—"Conduct of England, with regard to what has passed in Poland, since the death of king Augustus, and the transactions in other parts relative thereto, extracted from the correspondence with his majesty's ministers in foreign parts," from February to November 1733. "Continuation of the Conduct, &c." from November 1733 to July 1734.

announced, Louis the Fifteenth determined to support the claims of his father-in-law, to the crown of Poland, in defiance of the Emperor and Russia, who favoured the elector of Saxony, son of the deceased monarch. He declared to all the foreign embassadors, that he would not suffer any power to oppose the freedom of election in Poland. This declaration implied, that he expected no opposition to be made to the election of Stanislaus, because the influence of France in Poland was so great, as to preclude the choice of any other candidate. And as Spain was prepared to act offensively against the Emperor, and the king of Sardinia was on the point of concluding an alliance with France and Spain, Walpole had a difficult and delicate part to act. He was no less anxious than the Emperor or Russia, to exclude Stanislaus; and yet he was unwilling to offend France, by taking an open and active share in his exclusion. He was no less zealous to promote the election of Augustus, in return for his guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction. But as he was determined to decline entering into a war, if it could be declined with honour, his conduct evinced consummate address and prudence.

Although the assurances to second the pretensions of the elector, and to exclude Stanislaus, were as strong as words could express; yet every declaration was avoided which seemed to imply in the most distant degree, the co-operation of force. To the Czarina, who announced her inclination to unite with the king and the

Emperor in filling the vacancy, and hoped that the choice would not fall on Stanislaus, or any French prince, it was replied, that the king would use his endeavours for the election of an unexceptionable person, and second the Czarina's disposition to secure the public tranquillity.

To the Emperor (who declared his resolution to support the freedom of election, according to the constitution of Poland, which expressions were construed as meaning an exclusion of Stanislaus, and who requested that the English minister at Warsaw might act in concert with him, Russia, and Prussia), every assurance was given, that the king of England approved the resolution of promoting a free election in favour of an unexceptionable prince, and would forward the same design, as far as could be done by good offices. It was also urged that Mr. Woodward, the minister at Dresden, should contribute as much as possible to the same views; and should any complaint be afterwards made, that he had acted less warmly than might be expected against Stanislaus, he was to allege in excuse, the unwillingness of the king to give such an offence to France, without advantage to himself or his allies, and his small influence in the affairs of that distant kingdom.

At the same time the king ordered his minister at Warsaw to give the strongest assurances of his affection and friendship towards that republic. He was to declare upon all occasions for a free election, in favour of any prince, who was not displeasing to the neighbouring powers, and

in whom the Poles might find a security for their liberties. He was to act in concert with the ministers of the Emperor and the Czarina, and assist them in obtaining the election of Augustus; but he was to use the utmost discretion, not to join in giving the exclusion to any person, except the Pretender or his children. He was to oppose Stanislaus, yet not in such a manner as might give offence, though he need not conceal his wishes in favour of the party espoused by the Emperor and his allies. If any encouragement was given to the Pretender, he was to protest against it, and leave the kingdom.

The British cabinet carried their caution on this occasion to the highest degree of delicacy. The Imperial ministers delivered to Mr. Robinson* a paper, importing that France appearing determined to break the peace, a rupture might be prevented by a strict union between the Emperor and his allies. For this reason the Emperor desired to concert measures with England and the United Provinces, either for deterring France, or for repelling hostilities. The Emperor, it was urged, had amply provided Luxemburg, but the remaining part of the Netherlands should be jointly secured, and the empire protected. The concurrence of the king of England was expected, because he had *approved* all the measures and sentiments adopted by the Imperial court, in regard to the Polish election. In reply to these insinuations, Mr. Robinson was ordered to observe, that this expression

* July 15, Walpole Papers.

might be understood as if the king had actually *approved* the exclusion of Stanislaus by force, whereas such an insinuation ought not to pass unnoticed, because it was directly contrary to the most positive assurances, which had been transmitted from England to the British minister at Vienna; that the king so far from having approved any design to commit hostilities in Poland, never could believe the Emperor entertained such a design, and that he had always declared for a free election. The truth of this statement was acknowledged by the court of Vienna; and Mr. Robinson was again directed to dissuade them from pursuing such measures as might cause disturbances in Europe. These strong and repeated remonstrances finally prevailed on the Emperor, not openly to employ force, but to leave that part to the Czarina.

In conformity to the same principle, the British ministers at Warsaw and Vienna expressed the disapprobation of the king, that the Imperial minister at Warsaw had accompanied the Russian embassador when he notified the resolution of the Czarina to exclude Stanislaus by force. And when the Emperor was solicitous to engage England in a treaty of mutual defence with Russia, the answer implied, that the king was ready to conclude a treaty of friendship with the Czarina; but would not agree that it should contain defensive stipulations, or engagements to assist her if she should be attacked in Europe on account of the transactions in Poland.

During these events, the election took place in Poland. The French party so far prevailed in favour of Stanislaus, who in 1710 had been declared for ever incapable of being elected that a majority of the diet of convocation in April entered into a confederation to choose no one but a native, born of Roman Catholic parents, who possessed no sovereignty out of Poland, and was not supported by any foreign troops beyond the frontiers. In consequence of this resolution, which was declaring in his favour, Stanislaus secretly passed into Poland, made his appearance at Warsaw, and was chosen by the diet of election, which assembled on the 12th of September. Against this election, the Saxon party came forward, supported by a Russian army which entered Warsaw without resistance. The adherents of Stanislaus were dispersed, he himself fled to Dantzic, and the partizans of Augustus assembled at Wola, the plain of election near Warsaw, and proclaimed him king of Poland.

The indignation of Louis the Fifteenth, was not appeased by the professions of the Emperor, that he had not acted offensively against Stanislaus, because he had sent no troops into Poland. But arguing that the co-operation of his minister at Warsaw with the Russian and Saxon ministers, and the assembling of 6,000 men on the frontiers of Poland, were the same as if he had openly employed force, the French monarch declared war against him, in conjunction with Spain and Sardinia.

The declaration of war on the part of the

three allied powers, was followed by instant hostilities. The French army, under Marshal Berwick, took the fort of Kehl, and invaded Germany; another corps, under the count of Belle Isle, overran Loraine.

The Emperor, in a memorial delivered by Count Kinski, his embassador in London, Nov. 1-19, claimed the succours stipulated by the last treaty of Vienna, and claimed them in a manner which showed his conviction, that England could not in justice refuse them. In fact, he had many reasons to suppose that he should obtain the required assistance. For notwithstanding the precautions which the English cabinet had taken to dissuade him from using force in Poland, they at the same time secretly employed every effort to procure the exclusion of Stanislaus, the validity of whose election the English minister at Warsaw refused to acknowledge. They had been highly instrumental in promoting the conclusion of the alliance between the Emperor and Augustus, by which the Emperor, in return for the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction, promised assistance to procure his free nomination to the throne of Poland, in opposition to the partizans of Stanislaus, and to support him, if chosen, by force of arms.

The king was decidedly in favour of assisting the Emperor. The queen, though desirous of upholding the pacific system of Walpole, did not venture to oppose the wishes of her royal consort; and lord Harrington, who, as secretary of state, principally conducted the negotiation

with the court of Vienna, was inclined to the same opinion.

In this crisis of affairs, Walpole stood in a very delicate situation, and was reduced to a disagreeable alternative. On one side, he was to oppose the earnest wishes of the king, to act in contradiction to the sentiments of part of the cabinet, and at the same time to appear as if he was abetting the degradation of the house of Austria, and promoting the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon. On the other side he was to plunge the nation into a war for the ostensible purpose of giving a king to Poland, in which England had no immediate concern, in opposition, perhaps, to the public opinion, and at the eve of a general election. But as he had for some time foreseen that he should be reduced to follow one of these disagreeable alternatives, he had previously collected all the information necessary to regulate his decision, and to enable him to pursue that line of conduct which seemed liable to the fewest inconveniences.

The Emperor had been repeatedly exhorted to put the Austrian Netherlands in a state of defence; from a certain apprehension, that unless that was effected, the barrier would be exposed, and the Dutch so alarmed, from the danger of being over-run by the French, that they would never have the spirit to act with vigour, and co-operate with England. But instead of hearkening to these just remonstrances, Luxemburg was alone provided with the necessary means; the fortifications in the

other parts were left in a most defenceless state, and the care of them consigned to the English and Dutch; a care which, the greffier Fagell observed in a letter to Bruyninx, "The Dutch, not yet recovered from the expenses of the late war, *could not*, and the English *would not* take upon themselves."

The Emperor had also been repeatedly exhorted to conclude a defensive alliance with the king of Sardinia, who was strongly inclined to prefer his friendship to that of France and Spain; and his co-operation, which, instead of opening to the French the key of Italy, would have excluded them from that country, might have been obtained by trifling sacrifices. But the emperor had, either from his usual dilatoriness, or from an unwillingness to cede any portion of the Milanese, declined engaging on his side so important an ally, until it was too late; and Charles Emanuel* apologised to the king of England, that he had been reluctantly compelled, for his own safety, to accept the offers of France and Spain, because the Emperor had refused to comply with his terms. In consequence of this imprudent neglect, and a total inattention to the common means of defence, the Austrian dominions in Italy were incapable of resisting the inroads of the combined powers.

The situation of the United Provinces did not afford the faintest prospect of inducing them to engage in offensive operations. The leading men

* Walpole Papers. Letter from the King of Sardinia to George the Second, March, 1734. Correspondence.

were offended with the king of England, for having given the princess Anne in marriage to the prince of Orange, without previous notice, and were suspicious that he was attempting to revive the office of stadtholder. The dread of being exposed to a French invasion, should they take an active part in favour of the Emperor, was so great, that the states general were inclined to accept the offers of France, to conclude a neutrality for the Austrian Netherlands, and agree not to assist the Emperor, in consequence of any event which related to the Polish election. Repeated remonstrances had been ineffectually made from the British cabinet, against this precipitate measure.

At length Walpole, anxious to obtain the co-operation of a power, without whom England could not venture to act, privately sent his brother Horace* to the Hague, for the purpose of conciliating the leading men, over whom he had great influence, and of persuading the states general to adopt more manly and decisive resolutions. On his arrival April, 18, 1734, he found things in a very indifferent situation. The people in general were much dissatisfied, not only with the conduct of the court of Vienna, but with that of England; upon a mistaken notion, that the king was labouring, out of partiality to the Emperor, to force them into the present war, and was endeavouring to promote the interests of the prince of Orange, at the expense of the Dutch constitution.

* Horace Walpole's Apology and Dispatches.

The news of the private mission of the minister's brother had an instantaneous effect in raising the hopes of the Imperial court,* and gave a convincing proof that the cabinet of London were serious in their wishes to assist the Emperor, if it could be done without endangering the security of England. It however had no other consequence than to restore the confidence between the two nations, and conciliate the leading men in Holland. For the Dutch were so dispirited with the defenceless state of the Netherlands, so disgusted with the Emperor, and so averse to resume the burthens of war, that he could not bring them to adopt vigorous measures, or to countenance the smallest hopes of joining in offensive operations.†

The internal situation of England was no less unfavourable to an immediate breach with France. A long period of peace and tranquillity had increased commerce, agriculture, and the resources of the country. The landed proprietors were highly satisfied with the diminution of the land tax, the monied men were no less pleased with deferring the payment of the national debt; the Jacobites were daily decreasing; the Tories, though personally hostile to the minister began to experience the comforts of good order, derived from a settled government. Confidence had taken place of distrust; and the state of the country both at home and

* Mr. Robinson to Lord Harrington, May 11th, 1733. Grantham Papers.

† Journal of Horace Walpole. Walpole Papers.

abroad, exhibited the strongest symptoms of stability and credit. Walpole appreciated these happy effects, derived from external peace and internal tranquillity. He was unwilling to risk the unpopularity of imposing new burthens; he was well aware that a war with France would renew the hopes and excite the efforts of the fallen party, and realise his constant prediction, that the crown of England would be fought for on British ground.

The result which he drew from this combination of circumstances and events was, that it would be highly imprudent to involve the country in hostilities, without the co-operation of Holland. He was fully convinced that the nation would not readily approve a war for a Polish election; and that parliament would not be inclined to grant sufficient supplies for so chimerical and distant a project.

He did not think it prudent, however, to oppose at once the decided opinion of the king, who was eager for war. He insinuated the necessity of temporising, till a new parliament was chosen, and the nation could be roused to a sense of the danger which would arise from the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon; and till the people were made capable of judging, that the only foundation upon which the liberties of Europe could subsist was, the indivisibility of a power like the house of Austria, sufficient to be opposed to the house of Bourbon.*

* Mr. Robinson to Mr. Pelham, Vienna, November 11, 1733. Grantham Papers.

It was not however without great difficulty that he obtained the consent of the king and cabinet to adopt what appeared no less pusillanimous in itself, than contrary to the tenor of the last treaty concluded at Vienna. But he gained his point by firmness and perseverance; by inculcating the necessity of mature deliberation, and of avoiding extremities, till it should appear that the measures were no less practicable than advantageous: and he considered it prudent to feel the pulse of public opinion, which ought always to be consulted in cases of such extreme importance, as a declaration of war.

In consequence of this determination, an answer was returned to the request of succours, made by the Imperial court, to the following import; That the king was concerned to see the peace broken, and the Emperor attacked; that he had hitherto employed his best offices, though unsuccessfully, to prevent the rupture, and would now use all possible means to accommodate matters. That the motives hitherto alleged for the commencement of hostilities, being founded upon Polish affairs, in which the king had taken no part, but that of using his good offices, it was far from being clear, that he was obliged, purely on that account, to enter into the quarrel. That as to the demand of succours, though always ready to execute his engagements, and to show his particular friendship for the Emperor, he must yet be satisfied that the demand was founded on positive engagements, before he involved his people in a war. He must therefore,

carefully examine the allegations on both sides, consult his allies, particularly the States General, and put himself in such a posture, as might enable him to provide effectually for his own security, and for the execution of his engagements.

The Emperor, highly indignant at the backwardness of the British cabinet, projected an expedient which seemed calculated to forward the accomplishment of his views. Well knowing the aversion of England to the marriage between an archduchess and a prince of the house of Bourbon, and the remonstrances which had been made to him on that subject, not only during the time when he was at variance with England, but even lately by Mr. Robinson, on the mere rumour that such a measure was in agitation; he affected to open a negotiation with Spain, and to renew the proposal of a marriage between his second daughter and Don Carlos.

On the arrival of a courier from Vienna,* count Kinski painted in the strongest colours to the king, the great uneasiness and danger of the Emperor's situation; his inability to resist singly the united arms of France, Spain, and Sardinia, and at the same time the little dependence to be placed upon the king of Prussia. He stated the unpromising conduct of several other princes of the empire, and the neutrality already accepted by some; together with the strong indications of a resolution and concert among several, even

* Continuation of the Conduct of England, &c. January 1734. Walpole Papers.

of the electors, to prevent the empire itself from taking any part; and lastly, the despair of assistance from the States General. He concluded these representations with insisting in the Emperor's name, that the king should no longer defer explaining his intention, but should immediately give a positive promise to come, the very next campaign, to his assistance. Without this promise, he insinuated, the Emperor must comply with the demands of Spain, in giving his second daughter in marriage to Don Carlos, as the only means still in his power, for extricating himself and his family from their present difficulties, for preventing the destruction of the house of Austria, and for preserving the equilibrium in Europe.

This artful expedient, however, did not succeed. Walpole had not been so much alarmed on a former occasion, at the rumour of such a marriage, as lord Townshend and the other ministers; and he now conceived that matters were considerably changed. He conjectured that the Emperor only threw out this insinuation, with a view to alarm England, rather than with a determination to adopt the measure; and he was of opinion, that even if he should be in earnest, provided the eldest of the archduchesses was affianced to the duke of Loraine, the marriage of the second with Don Carlos, would not be productive of great disadvantages. In all events, to use his own expressions, "Circumstances "change; things distant and uncertain must "yield to present and certain dangers."—He

concludes, by observing: "In whatever measures are to be pursued, the maritime powers should endeavour to act in concert, that they may have greater weight in any accommodation, and be better able to support themselves in case of extremity."*

In conformity with these sentiments, orders were immediately dispatched to Mr. Robinson, to explain to the Imperial court, the several reasons which made it impossible for the king, even if the Emperor's claim of succours were well founded, to assist him so soon as was expected. He was at the same time to declare, that the king no longer opposed the marriage of the second archduchess with Don Carlos; it being represented to him as the only means left for retrieving the Emperor's affairs, by detaching Spain from France. Mr. Robinson was, however, to insist, that nothing should be concluded in this affair, without the king's intervention, and that due precautions should be taken for preventing the dangers that might be apprehended to the liberties of Europe from such an alliance; amongst which, he was to insinuate, that the marrying of the eldest archduchess to the duke of Loraine, under the guaranty of Spain, was looked upon as one of the most effectual securities.

About the same time, finding the Dutch

* Among the Orford Papers, I find some reflections on this subject, written by Sir Robert Walpole. They are without date or signature, but were undoubtedly made at this period. See Correspondence, v. 3. p. 147.

utterly averse to encounter the burthens and dangers of a war, and anxious to prevent them from throwing themselves into the arms of France, the minister enforced the absolute necessity of acceding to the neutrality, in compliance with their earnest wishes. Accordingly the king exhorted the Emperor to acquiesce in the neutrality for the Netherlands, and offered his mediation, in conjunction with the States General, to effect an accommodation, and to restore peace.

The declaration in favour of the marriage, which was supposed to be so contrary to the wishes of the English cabinet, and the tender of good offices only, instead of effectual succours, so highly irritated the Emperor, that his answer to both these propositions contained no less haughtiness and spirit, than if the affairs of the house of Austria had been in the most prosperous situation.

The declaration concerning the marriage, made a similar impression on all the Imperial ministers. They treated the supposition, that the Emperor had ever entertained the least thought of marrying his second daughter to the duke of Parma, as injurious; they even affected to doubt that Kinski had ever spoken in the manner imputed to him. And in the answer which was delivered by the Emperor's order to Mr. Robinson, upon the 18th of February, the Emperor declared, in the most solemn terms, that he never had any thought, nor ever would condescend to purchase peace on those terms.

He likewise formally disavowed Kinski, and all others who gave similar hints, declaring his determined resolution to defend himself to the last extremity.

In answer to their offer of good offices, the Emperor peremptorily rejected the proposal of a neutrality for the Netherlands; declared his firm resolution of supporting his cause by force of arms; and so far from temporising, he threatened the Dutch to remove the war into Flanders, by attacking France on the side of Luxemburg.

With a view of rendering the interposition of England more effectual, and giving weight to the proposal of good offices, Walpole, as usual, recurred to preventive measures, and adopted the resolution of putting the country in a respectable posture of defence, tempering caution with spirit, and deliberation with energy. The speech from the throne, on the opening of the session, corresponded with these principles. After recommending the utmost prudence and precaution, and exhorting parliament to weigh and consider circumstances thoroughly, before a final determination was taken, to act in concert with the States General, and to avoid precipitate declarations; the king added, "In the mean time, I am persuaded you will make such provisions as shall secure my kingdoms, rights, and possessions from all dangers and insults, and maintain the respect due to the British nation. Whatever part it may in the end be most reasonable for us to act, it will, in all views,

be necessary, when all Europe is preparing for arms, to put ourselves in a proper posture of defence. As this will best preserve the peace of the kingdom, so it will give us a due weight and influence in whatever measures we shall take in conjunction with our allies. But should the defence of the nation not be sufficiently provided for, it will make us disregarded abroad, and may prove a temptation and encouragement to the desperate views of those who never fail to flatter themselves with the hopes of great advantages from public troubles and disorders."*

* Journals. Chandler.

PERIOD THE SIXTH:

From the Dissolution of Parliament, to the Death of Queen CAROLINE.

1734—1737.

CHAPTER 44.

1734—1735.

Successful Operations of the Allies—Embassy of Horace Walpole to the Hague—Indignation of the Emperor, and his Attempts to remove Walpole—Account of Strickland, Bishop of Namur, and his Mission to England—Origin, Progress, and Termination of the Secret Convention—Renewal of Hostilities—Fluctuating State of the British Cabinet—Embarrassments and Firmness of Walpole.

THE Emperor exposed, without the assistance of a single ally, to the united arms of France, Spain, and Sardinia, was reduced to a most disastrous situation. The Milanese was wholly subdued by the allied forces; the victory of Bitonto on the 5th of May secured to Don Carlos the conquest of Naples and Sicily; and Mantua, the only possession which remained to the Emperor in Italy, was threatened with a siege, and unable to hold out for any length of time. In Germany, the Imperial forces, though commanded by Eugene, were too in-

ferior to resist the operations of the French; the capture of Treves, Traerbach, and Philipsburg, opened to the French an entrance into the Empire, and Eugene was compelled to act on the defensive.

This disastrous situation of the Austrian affairs, alarmed the British cabinet, and though the minister was firmly resolved to avoid hostilities; yet he saw the immediate necessity of augmenting the forces, both in England and Holland, and to be at all events prepared for war.

The great object was, to secure the concurrence of the United Provinces, and to prevail on them to act in concert with England, that the mediation of the two maritime powers might be accepted by the Emperor, and respected by France and her allies.

To obtain the co-operation of Holland, Horace Walpole, in July 1734, had been again dispatched to the Hague, with the character of embassador extraordinary, and had warmly pressed the States General to augment their forces. Although his representations had not been attended with due effect; yet he had considerably removed the jealousy and disagreement which had recently arisen between the two maritime powers, and gave hopes that his attempts might prove successful.

While these transactions were passing between the king and the Republic, under the promise of inviolable secrecy on both sides, frequent memorials were presented by count Kinski,

calling upon the king in the strongest manner, to fulfil his engagements towards the Emperor, by instant and effectual succours.

Although no specific answer could be returned, while the negotiation at the Hague was depending; yet previous intimations had been given to the Imperial court, that no immediate assistance could be expected from England in the present situation of affairs.

But as soon as the negotiation was brought to a conclusion, and it was determined to make the offer of their joint mediation for an accommodation of the differences, lord Harrington gave to count Kinski, an account of this resolution; and orders were transmitted to their ministers at Paris and Madrid, to propose a general pacification, through the mediation of the maritime powers. The Emperor received the notification communicated by Mr. Robinson, with no less surprise than indignation, and his minister delivered in a strong and pointed memorial. In this paper, the Emperor insisted on the rectitude of his own conduct and views, the insincerity of France, and the wanton aggressions of the allies; he claimed from the maritime powers effectual co-operation to insure the guaranties stipulated by existing treaties, before his acceptance of their proposed mediation; and added, he would never have acted as they had, and after a delay of nine months, offered his mediation instead of sending assistance.*

* Reponse de la cour Imperiale aux representations de Messrs. Robinson et Bruininx, 30 Juin, 1734. Walpole Papers.

While the answer to this memorial was preparing in concert with the States General, the Emperor became indignant at the delay, and imputing the denial of succours to the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, broke out into the most intemperate expressions against him. Totally unacquainted with the first principles of the English constitution, forming, from the accounts transmitted by count Kinski, wrong notions of the royal prerogative, and the state of parties, and knowing that George the Second was personally eager for the war, he entertained the most sanguine hopes of bringing over the nation to his own sentiments.

Under these impressions, he revived the chimerical plan which he had ineffectually adopted in 1726, of appealing to the nation against the minister. His embassador in London caballed with the opposition; endeavoured to excite the sympathy of the nation; threw the blame of his depression on Sir Robert Walpole; appealed to the king's feelings, and to his inveterate hatred of the house of Bourbon; and endeavoured, by means of the Empress, to interest queen Caroline in his favour.

These imprudent attempts did not escape the knowledge of Walpole. An intercepted letter from the Emperor to count Kinski, fully developed the plan in agitation, and displayed the threats which Charles the Sixth weakly supposed would alarm the minister, and compel him to act offensively against France.

Charles even carried his resentment so far,

that he attempted to obtain the removal of Walpole, by means of a meddling emissary, who was ill calculated to succeed in so difficult an enterprise.

This emissary was Strickland, bishop of Namur, by birth an Englishman, and by religion a Roman catholic. Warmly attached to the cause of the Pretender, he sacrificed his country to his principles, and was promoted to the Abbey of Saint Pierre de Preaux, in Normandy. In the latter end of the reign of George the First, he maintained a correspondence with the opposition; and through their interest with the Emperor, he was raised to the bishopric of Namur. He afterwards became a spy to the English ministry, and was considered as a proper person of confidence to reside at Rome, for the purpose of giving information with regard to the Pretender. With this view, lord Harrington* applied to the Emperor to obtain for him a cardinal's hat; and Mr. Robinson was ordered to second that recommendation with his whole influence. The bishop being a man of an artful and intriguing turn, plausible in his manner, and having gained great credit for his strict regularity and disinterestedness in the management of his diocese, was admitted to several audiences of the Empress, and so far insinuated himself into her good graces, that he was employed to thwart the marriage of the eldest arch-

* Walpole and Grantham Papers. Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, September 8. To Horace Walpole, November 13, 1734. Correspondence.

duchess with Don Carlos, to which she had an insuperable aversion.

During these audiences, he artfully insinuated such remarks on the mismanagement of the Imperial ministry, as induced the Empress to obtain for him a private audience of the Emperor. He availed himself of this permission to present several memorials, for the amelioration of the domestic affairs, which were well received by a monarch, fond of new schemes, and inclined to think unfavourably of his ministers. From these topics, he digressed to lord Harrington's recommendation, and represented himself as capable either of forcing the British administration to enter into the war, or if that failed, of driving out Sir Robert Walpole, through the intrigues of opposition. The Emperor weakly acceded to this proposal, and supplied the bishop with private credentials to the king and queen of England. On his departure, he was instructed to take advantage of the decided inclination of the king to enter into the war, of the apparent lukewarmness of the queen to support the pacific system, and of the disunion of sentiments in the ministry.

The bishop of Namur was received by the king and queen in so gracious a manner, as to give umbrage to Sir Robert Walpole. He had a long and secret conference with Lord Harrington;* Reports were soon in circulation, that he would draw the nation into a war, that he was privately supported by the king and queen, and

* Orford Papers. Correspondence.

abetted by lord Harrington; and that the fall of the minister would be the immediate consequence.

It became necessary to discredit these rumours. Horace Walpole hinted to lord Harrington his opinion of the bishop, and the ill policy of appearing to countenance so dangerous a person. In the private correspondence which he held with queen Caroline,* he also artfully represented the impropriety of giving such a reception to a missionary who was so favourable to the opposition. He urged the necessity of not suffering a person of his suspicious character to remain in England; he insinuated that the Emperor should be undeceived in his notion, that the king was of a different opinion from the ministry, and be positively informed that England could not take a part in the war. Walpole, in concert with his brother, supported this measure, and induced the queen, herself, to write to the Empress,† contradicting the false accounts sent by Kinski and the bishop of Namur, and candidly declaring that no succours could be given by England, until the offer of the mediation had been rejected. The minister carried his point; the bishop of Namur was civilly dismissed; the king was either convinced of the necessity of adopting pacific measures, or yielded reluctantly to a plan, which he could not venture to oppose. Lord Harrington submitted to the superior influence of Walpole;

* Orford Papers. Letter to queen Caroline, October 18-29, 1734. Correspondence.

† Correspondence.

and the Emperor, with some hesitation, agreed to admit the good offices; and to accept the mediation of the maritime powers.

Meanwhile, a secret negotiation was suddenly opened with France, which seemed at first to afford a prospect of a speedy accommodation, and on that account was eagerly embraced by Sir Robert Walpole; but which involved both him and his brother in considerable embarrassments, excited, in the course of its progress, the displeasure of the king, and occasioned a temporary disagreement among the ministers.

Horace Walpole maintained an intimate correspondence with baron Gedda, the Swedish minister at Paris, for whom he procured an annual pension of £.400; and as Gedda was on good terms with cardinal Fleury, and had communicated the private sentiments of the French minister, Horace Walpole had, at the suggestion of his brother, found means to convey hints for a general accommodation,

The situation of the British cabinet was exceedingly embarrassing. Being reproached on one side by the Emperor for not fulfilling the guaranty by declaring war, and on the other by France, for not being cordially disposed to favour a peace, it became expedient to take a decided part. But the co-operation of the United Provinces was considered by the minister, as a necessary means to insure success.

The timid and fluctuating disposition of persons and affairs in Holland, afforded little hope of terminating hostilities, unless France

could be induced, of her own accord, to open a negotiation. For it was sensibly urged* by the embassador at the Hague; "although these conditions may not be such as will be accepted by the Emperor; yet if they are once proposed to him by England and the States General, he will be undeceived in his fond expectations, that those powers will enter into the war for the purpose of recovering his dominions in Italy, and be inclined to turn his attention to some expedient for an accommodation."

With this view, Horace Walpole, with the private approbation of his brother, employed the intervention of his friend at Paris, and finally obtained the object so much desired. Baron Gedda acquainted him, that the cardinal, impressed with a desire to give peace to Europe, proposed to enter into a confidential correspondence with him, for the purpose of settling the preliminaries for a general pacification, to be communicated to no one but the Pensionary Slingelandt.† This overture being considered by a part of the cabinet as tending only to amuse, and as a snare employed by France, to prevent the adoption of vigorous measures, was at first warmly opposed; but being supported by queen Caroline and Sir Robert Walpole, and those members of administration, who adhered to their opinion, it was immediately accepted. A private correspondence took place, and the cardinal proposed to send a

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 6, 1734. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to the queen. Walpole Papers.

confidential person, by the name of Jannel, to the Hague, to settle and conclude the terms to which England or France would previously accede, before they were communicated on one side to the Emperor, and on the other to the allies of France.

This proposition of Cardinal Fleury being approved by the cabinet, an interesting correspondence took place between him and Horace Walpole, concerning the previous conditions to be settled for adjusting the preliminaries. The letters of the cardinal, and the answers of Horace Walpole, were transmitted to England for the approbation and direction of the king, and private accounts were regularly forwarded to Sir Robert Walpole.

During these transactions, Sir Robert Walpole bestowed extraordinary pains on foreign affairs. Besides holding a secret and constant correspondence with his brother, and suggesting, through his means, those sentiments with which he wished to impress the queen, he examined with peculiar attention the dispatches to and from the secretaries of state; took notes, and made references of the most important letters; and although he displeased the king by his firmness in suggesting pacific measures, and in some instances was secretly thwarted by lord Harrington, who acted in deference to the views of his sovereign, yet he would not suffer any measure to be pursued without his approbation, and directed or controlled the whole series of these intricate negotiations.

In consequence of this confidential intercourse, Jannel arrived at the Hague on the 5th of November; continued there only three days, and had three very important conferences with Horace Walpole and the Pensionary, with such secrecy, that his arrival was not suspected, until he had taken his departure. Of these three conferences, Horace Walpole transmitted an accurate and well written account to the British cabinet. An arrangement was made towards settling the preliminaries, in which the two parties, after proposing terms which could not be acceded to on either side, gradually approached each other, and seemed to be not very distant from the probability of coming to an amicable agreement. The terms proposed by Jannel, and opposed, or assented to by Horace Walpole, were to be referred on one side to the cardinal, and on the other to the British cabinet.

A plan for the preliminaries was now to be proposed by the cabinet, and forwarded to the Hague, for regulating the conduct of the embassador.

To engage England and Holland in the war, the Emperor had withdrawn all his troops from the barrier towns, and confined himself to the defence of Luxemburg. He represented that it was more the interest of the maritime powers than his own, to preserve the Low Countries from France, and therefore he should leave to them the care of their defence. This resolution had been privately taken without the knowledge

of Walpole, in concert with the king and lord Harrington, who were no less anxious than the Emperor to commence hostilities against France. In consequence of this resolution, a plan was formed by lord Harrington,* to be forwarded to Horace Walpole. It was worded in a most artful manner, and appeared to have no other design than to preserve the Low Countries from France. The embassador was ordered to insinuate to the Dutch, that if they would authorize the king to assure the Emperor of their design to augment their forces, his majesty would endeavour to prevail on the Emperor to send, without delay, a sufficient number of men from the Rhine for the defence of the Low Countries; and that the king, at the requisition of the Dutch, according to the tenor of the barrier treaty, would supply 10,000 men, provided they would furnish an equal number.

This dispatch, before it was sent to the Hague, was forwarded by a messenger to Sir Robert Walpole, who was then at Houghton, for his approbation. The minister highly disapproved the measure, and thought it necessary to express his disapprobation in such strong terms, that lord Harrington totally relinquished his design. In his answer to Walpole, he testified his concern that the draught which he proposed to write to Horace Walpole concerning the Netherlands, was so strongly condemned.† "The letter itself," he added, "is not sent."

* Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, Whitehall, November 5-16th, 1734. Correspondence.

† Sidney Papers. November 8th, 1734. Correspondence.

Soon afterwards, lord Harrington drew, by order of the king, a plan for the preliminaries, which was calculated to throw obstacles in the way of the negotiation with France, and to check the eagerness of Horace Walpole, for modifying and closing with the propositions of cardinal Fleury. These instructions were to be forwarded to the Hague, in a letter to the embassador, by which he was to be implicitly guided in this delicate business.* Lord Harrington prepared this letter on the 12th of November; but as it was an affair of too great importance to be precipitately decided without the concurrence of the minister, who was then at Houghton, he dispatched a messenger with a letter, enclosing a copy, and requesting his opinion. This plan met with no less disapprobation than that which related to the Netherlands; and Walpole was never engaged in a more difficult or delicate part. Although he well knew that to disapprove or alter it, was in effect to act in direct contradiction to the sentiments and wishes of the king, yet he did not hesitate to adopt that resolution. He considered the plan as wholly formed by lord Harrington; and in a very frank and candid manner, gave his objections, without attempting in the smallest degree to conceal, or even to palliate his opinion. And perhaps in no instance were the integrity, prudence, and firmness of Walpole more evident, than in the answer which he returned to lord Harrington on

* Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, November 12, 1734. Lord Harrington to Sir Robert Walpole, November 13, 1734. Correspondence.

this occasion. After making the most decisive objections to the plan, he concludes with great address. "I have treated the papers with that freedom you are pleased to allow me, and in a style proper for draughts prepared by your lordship subject to examination, and that had not yet passed the approbation of his majesty. If I thought I had been observing upon the king's sentiments, I should have expressed myself with that deference and submission which my duty requires me to observe; but your lordship's goodness will excuse my freedom."*

In the middle of December, Jannel returned to the Hague, and the conferences were resumed. The consequence of these meetings was, a project of pacification concerted between England and the States, as conformable as possible to the sentiments and desires of France, as they were explained by the cardinal, in his private correspondence with Horace Walpole and the Pensionary, and which ought to have been signed at the Hague by Jannel. But as the French ministers had protracted the negotiation, by raising new demands, and creating fresh difficulties, it was deemed expedient to satisfy the expectation and impatience of Europe, by publishing the plan.

Accordingly, the king in his speech, which he delivered at the opening of the new parliament, observed, "that in a short time, a plan would be offered to the consideration of all the

* Sir Robert Walpole to lord Harrington, November $\frac{1}{12}$, 1734. Correspondence.

parties engaged in the present war, as a basis for a general negotiation of peace, in which the honour and interest of all parties had been consulted, as far as the circumstances of time, and the present posture of affairs would permit."*

The French ministers affected to be dissatisfied with this proceeding. They pretended that it was a breach of that secrecy which had been promised, and remonstrated, that this hasty publication of the conditions for a general peace, would entirely frustrate the good intentions of France, by alarming the allies. At the same time, Jannel, instead of signing the project of the preliminaries, according to the repeated assurances of cardinal Fleury, received a new counter project, and fresh instructions, to which the English and Dutch ministers at the Hague could not agree, and from which he could not venture to recede. Thus this important negotiation, which had lasted six months, and had been conducted with the utmost secrecy, was suddenly suspended. Jannel quitted the Hague, charged with expostulatory letters to the cardinal, on the unexpected miscarriage of this great work, which was expected to give peace to Europe; and on the following day, Horace Walpole set out for London, carrying with him the unsigned project of pacification, which had been concerted with the ministers of the Republic.

The principal articles of this project were, the abdication of Stanislaus, on the condition of retaining his title; the evacuation of Poland by

* Journals. Chandler, vol. 9. p. 3.

the Russian Troops; the cession of Naples and Sicily to Don Carlos, and of the Tortonese, Novarese, and Vigevenasco to the king of Sardinia. To the Emperor; the restoration of all the other conquests, the immediate possession of Parma and Placentia, and the succession of Tuscany, except Leghorn, which was to be created an independant republic; France to guaranty the Pragmatic Sanction; Spain and Sardinia to renew their guaranties. This plan was to be considered as the basis of an immediate negotiation for a general peace, and an armistice to be strenuously recommended by the mediators.

The Emperor having testified his inclination to accept this plan, though he afterwards attempted to make some alterations which were inadmissible, it was presented in form to the respective ministers of Austria, France, Spain, and Sardinia. The Earl of Waldegrave returned to Paris, with instructions to press the cardinal in the strongest manner to support this project, according to his solemn assurances in his private correspondence with Horace Walpole. But his representations were not attended with effect. The opinion of lord Harrington, which had been confirmed by the earl of Waldegrave in his former dispatches from Paris, that France was insincere in these overtures, and only intended to deceive the British cabinet, proved true, and Sir Robert Walpole was the dupe of his pacific inclinations.

The real cause of this failure was derived from the irresolution and inactivity of the Dutch, of

which Chauvelin, who either governed or influenced the cardinal, availed himself, to prevent the conclusion of the secret convention with England.

"One of the fundamental principles of Chauvelin's politics," observes Horace Walpole, in a letter dated September 4, to lord Harrington, "was, to separate, if possible, the States from England. The basis of all his measures, when he entered into the war, was founded upon this principle; and his language and exertions have been from time to time more or less violent and haughty, in carrying it on, according to the appearance of a division or union between the king and the States. By this same rule or compass, he has dexterity enough to steer the cardinal's pliant temper, or adapt his own sentiments to the cardinal's, whenever he finds the old gentleman's vigour, from an apprehension of the maritime powers taking jointly a share in this war, begin to swerve and incline to peace."

In the present circumstances, Chauvelin well knew the Dutch could never be induced to enter into the war, as long as they had no apprehensions for the safety of the Netherlands; and although the Pensionary expressed, in a letter to the cardinal, his sentiments in strong and lively terms in favour of the project, with a view to support and add weight to the representations of Horace Walpole; yet the effect of his letter was fully counterbalanced by the report made by Fenelon, the French embassador at the Hague, of the profound tranquillity in Holland,

and of the determined resolution of the Dutch not to engage in hostilities.

The British cabinet now roused itself from its pacific lethargy, and Walpole himself was foremost in recommending and enforcing the necessity of making the most active exertions. Two motions, warmly supported by him, were carried in the house of commons, though not without great opposition,* on the 7th and 14th of February, 1735, for taking 30,000 seamen and 26,000 soldiers into pay, in addition to 12,000 men in Ireland, and 6,000 Danes, according to the subsidiary treaty with Denmark.

While these augmentations were making with unusual vigour, it was determined to lay before the States General the strongest representations, for the purpose of stimulating them to similar exertions, though all hopes of effecting a general accommodation were not absolutely relinquished. Horace Walpole was directed to take Paris in his route to the Hague, to expostulate with the cardinal on his evasive conduct, to induce him if possible to ratify the terms to which he had consented. If he did not succeed in that effort, he was to endeavour at least to procure an armistice; and at all events to obtain the final sentiments of France, that at his return to the Hague, he might be able to concert proper measures with the States.

He pursued the object of his mission with no less spirit than address. In a long conference with the cardinal, he explained the motive and

* 256 to 183, and 261 to 208. Chandler.

purport of his mission, recapitulated the rise, progress, and issue of the secret negotiation, obviated the principal objections which had been urged by the cardinal in his last letters, and supported each article of the project of pacification, which Jannel ought to have signed at the Hague. He stated also, in the strongest manner, the fatal consequences which might result from a refusal to fulfil his promise, and pressed him to a speedy consent to the plan and armistice. The cardinal, in reply, pleaded the impossibility of compliance, by reason of the general outcry of the French nation, the council of state, and the allies against the plan, as partial and dishonourable. He particularly represented the impropriety of the demand, that France should guaranty the Pragmatic Sanction, without any advantage in return; and asserted that Tuscany, with Parma and Placentia, in addition to the Milanese, would render the Emperor more formidable in Italy than before the rupture. He also hinted at the danger of disobliging Spain, and of compelling her to enter into a separate accommodation with the Emperor.

To these objections, Horace Walpole answered with such address and force, and alarmed the cardinal so much, by declaring that the miscarriage of the negotiation would be followed by a general war, or a family alliance between the courts of Madrid and Vienna, that he brought him in appearance to approve an armistice, for entering into an immediate negotiation, and to promise to use his influence with the king of Sar-

dinia, and by this means to force Spain to accede. Fleury also expressed his willingness, that France and the maritime powers should sign a declaration, engaging to promote by a secret and confidential concert, the conclusion of a peace, on the conditions regulated in the late correspondence. His approbation was even carried so far, that when Horace Walpole produced a project of a declaration, consonant to the cardinal's new propositions and wishes, he expressed his readiness to take it into consideration, and promised to exert his whole influence in bringing the great work to a happy conclusion.*

Yet, notwithstanding these solemn assurances, he either had not power, or wanted inclination to fulfil his promise. He soon after observed, that the project laid before his royal master was deemed inadmissible, and that the article of the armistice, if ratified, would cover France with shame, and deprive her of all her allies.

It was now evident that the cardinal could no longer abide by his declarations of disinterestedness, and that he was endeavouring to suggest some artful expedient, by which he might evade his own assertions, that France required nothing for herself. It was plain, though he did not venture to avow it, that Loraine was the object of her wishes; and that as long as the allies continued to be successful against the Emperor, and England and Holland did not take an active and

* Horace Walpole's Dispatches to the duke of Newcastle, and to Pensionary Slingelandt, April 4th and 6th, 1735. Walpole Papers.

manly part, the strongest representations would have no effect.

In vain therefore Horace Walpole reproached the cardinal with the duplicity and weakness of his conduct; in vain he renewed his instances for a suspension of arms, and represented the fatal consequences which would probably result from his refusal; in vain he threatened to publish an account of the whole transaction, and expose him to the world.

The cardinal was abashed and confounded, but not convinced, or moved to compliance. Although he affected earnestly to desire that a plan of pacification should be formed and ratified, yet he could not be induced to explain himself, either on the terms or the method; and he delivered his sentiments in so confused and inarticulate a manner, that the British embassador could collect nothing but vague promises, without any specific proposal. Horace Walpole accordingly departed from Paris, leaving the negotiation in the same state as on his arrival.

Lord Harrington in this instance spoke the unanimous language of the British cabinet, when in his instructions to Horace Walpole,* he painted in the strongest terms, the king's concern and indignation at the cardinal's late conduct, towards him and the States. He observed that this behaviour, whether the effect of artifice or irresolution, made it equally unwise and inexcusable to rely, without being at the

* Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, 15th April 1735.

same time well provided against all events, upon any future transaction with the cardinal, for terminating the troubles, which threatened to subvert the balance of Europe. He said, the period was now arrived, in which it was indispensably incumbent upon the maritime powers to defend the liberties of Europe; and to lose no time in putting themselves into a condition to act with vigour, whenever they should find it necessary. He added, that the king hoped the States would immediately make the proper augmentation of their forces, as he had himself done, by sea and land, in order to disabuse France and her allies in their presumption upon the supineness of the republic; and be in readiness to take such measures, in concert with England, as the preservation of their own, and the liberties of Europe might require.

In vain Horace Walpole strenuously exerted himself in fulfilment of these instructions. The recollection of the haughty and unfriendly conduct of the Imperial court; of the defection of England, at the peace of Utrecht, without securing a sufficient barrier to the States; jealousy of the prince of Orange, increased by his late marriage with the princess Anne; a total disregard for the losses of the Emperor in Italy, which they did not consider as their immediate concern, and the security of the Low Countries, by the convention of neutrality concluded with France, on the first appearance of a rupture, contributed to prevent the Dutch from taking any part in the war. These resolutions were fortified

by the melancholy consideration of the exhausted and distressed state of the republic; by an opinion, generally prevalent in Holland, of the cardinal's pacific disposition, and of the moderation of France; and particularly by the apprehension of confirming the Emperor in his supposed aversion to peace, by any appearance of vigour. Accordingly the States, instead of taking an active part, renewed their instances to the respective powers, for a favourable answer to the plan of pacification.

The Emperor was unwilling to agree to the previous conditions, unless the maritime powers engaged, should these conditions not be accepted by the allies, to commence hostilites. But they declined this engagement, because they suspected that the Emperor would throw obstacles in the way of the pacification, for the purpose of provoking a general war, which was the great object of his wishes. The Emperor behaved peevishly to England, and presumptuously to the States, who were dissatisfied with him, and suspicious that England was acting in concert with him to their prejudice.

The situation of affairs in Holland inspired cardinal Fleury with sufficient resolution to urge, in a private letter to Horace Walpole, a heavy accusation against him and the Pensionary, for having divulged the secret correspondence, and to justify himself in his refusal to comply with the conditions of the plan. He added that the publication of the plan had raised great indignation in the whole council, and he could not

venture to avow or espouse it. The main view of this letter, which was written April 30, was to close the secret correspondence with Horace Walpole; to serve as a preliminary to the answer of the allies, who rejected the terms of pacification proposed by the maritime powers, and to justify another campaign, which was opened with redoubled exertion.

Thus ended this important negotiation, in which cardinal Fleury, or rather Chauvelin, who governed the cardinal, deceived the British cabinet, lured the Dutch with the hopes of a pacification, and prevented them both from taking such vigorous measures, as would have stopped the allies in the career of conquest.

Yet cardinal Fleury does not seem to deserve the reproaches for duplicity which were now lavished upon him. We are too apt to estimate the conduct of other nations from what passes in our own, without duly considering the peculiar situation and circumstances of those with whom we are negotiating, and without knowing the real state of the public opinion, which every minister, even in the most despotic countries is in some measure obliged to consult. The real truth seems to be, that the English cabinet expected terms from France, with which France could not comply; that cardinal Fleury was probably sincere in his first overtures for peace, but was persuaded by the representations of Horace Walpole, to accede to conditions, which he could not afterwards venture to propose to the king and council of France. That on sober

reflection, he conceived it highly dishonourable in Louis the Fifteenth to desert Stanislaus, in support of whom the war had been undertaken, merely to obtain the transfer of some dominions in Italy, to Don Carlos and the king of Sardinia, without either effecting this object, taking vengeance on those who had prevented it, or obtaining some acquisition which might serve as an indemnity for the expenses of the war, and justify to his countrymen, the dereliction of the cause for which hostilities had been undertaken.

The object of Spain was to drive the Emperor from Italy; the king of Sardinia coveted the whole Milanese; while France under the mask of moderation and professions of disinterestedness, aimed at the acquisition of Loraine.

To reconcile such jarring interests, and to effect a general pacification, was not in the power of a divided cabinet, whose measures fluctuated with continued versatility. Orders were occasionally given by lord Harrington, in conformity with the sentiments of the king, and contrary to those of the first minister. These orders were sometimes opposed, or at least secretly counteracted by Walpole; either by himself, in his personal conferences with the king and queen, by the suggestions of Horace Walpole, in his private correspondence with the queen, or by the agency of the duke of Newcastle, who at this period was devoted to him. Various instructions were conveyed to the foreign ministers, each contrary to the other, as the inclina-

tions of the king and lord Harrington in favour of war, or the pacific sentiments of the first minister, gained the ascendancy.

The king was highly displeased with the refusal of the minister to enter into the war, and gave such unequivocal signs of displeasure, that queen Caroline could not venture to attempt openly to promote or justify his measures. But with a view to exculpate his conduct, she artfully threw the blame on Horace Walpole, whom she often rallied in the king's presence, as the principal cause of the inactivity of England, and hinted that his brother had been directed by his advice, influence, and known interference in foreign affairs.*

* Horace Walpole's Apology. Walpole Papers.

CHAPTER 45.

1735—1736.

Event of the general Elections—Meeting of the new Parliament—Proceedings—Prorogation—Difference between Spain and Portugal—adjusted by the armed Mediation of England—Progress of Hostilities between the Allies and the Emperor—Detail of the various Negotiations which led to the Conclusion of the Preliminaries—King's Speech—Unanimity of Parliament, in regard to Foreign Affairs.

THE minister and his friends laboured under great disadvantages, and had many difficulties to encounter in the management of the general elections. The neutrality of England became a matter of popular infamy; and even men of professed impartiality, severely censured Walpole, by whose influence the inclinations of the king and cabinet, to assist the house of Austria were restrained. The common topics of want of spirit, and the dereliction of national honour, had great effect in exciting discontents; while the advantages derived from the continuance of peace to trade, manufactures, and agriculture, being tacitly progressive, did not immediately attract public attention, or procure deserved applause. The rapid success of the French and Spanish arms and the humiliation of Austria, increased the national dissatisfaction. Above all,

the Excise scheme had excited ill humour and violent clamours, and was imprudently introduced a short time before the dissolution of parliament. It was particularly offensive in Scotland, where the frauds in the Customs were more extensive than in England. The greater part of the Whigs in Scotland were irritated against the court; and a large number manifested their dissatisfaction, in the manner of their opposition, on the election of the sixteen peers. Several of the Presbyterians were averse to the minister for the continuance of the test act, the repeal of which, notwithstanding repeated declarations of his private good wishes, he had never promoted.

Walpole embarked in support of his friends in many expensive contests, and expended a large sum out of his own private fortune.* The expenses of the contested election for the county of Norfolk amounted to £.10,000, and yet he failed of success. The two candidates, Morden and Coke, who stood for the Whig interest, and whom he supported, were supplanted by Bacon and Woodhouse, who were favoured by the Tories. Accordingly the return of members who supported his administration was inferior in number to those who sat in the preceding parliament.

The new parliament assembled on the 14th of January. The speech from the throne adverted to a plan, formed in concert with Holland, as a basis for a general negotiation; mentioned the treaty with Denmark; and concluded by ob-

* Etough says £.60,000.

serving, that while war was raging in Europe, it would be proper for Great Britain to maintain herself in a posture of defence.

The opposition to the address, in both houses, was vehement and formidable. The amendments proposed were supported with great ability, and the divisions of the anti-ministerial party in the upper house, were 37 against 87, and in the commons 185 against 265.

During this session few debates of importance occurred, and none which personally affected the minister. Although he permitted several motions made by opposition, to pass without a division, and in the contested elections as many were decided against, as for the administration; yet the material points proposed by government were carried. The subsidiary treaty with Denmark was approved; £.794,529 was granted for the land service, and 30,000 seamen were voted.

The attention of the upper house was occupied by a petition from several Scotch peers, complaining of undue influence in the election of the sixteen. The minister was accused of engaging votes by various acts of corruption, and of overawing the electors by the presence of troops. The principal persons who conducted this attack, were those who had been deprived of their places; but though managed with great address and asperity, it terminated in his favour, by a considerable majority. Two violent protests were entered, the first signed by 33, the second by 32 peers.*

* Lords' Debates.

The session was closed by prorogation on the 15th of May, when the king, in his speech from the throne, expressed an intention of visiting his German dominions, and appointing the queen regent during his absence, whose just and prudent administration he had experienced on a similar occasion. "Let me," he concluded, "earnestly recommend it to you to render the burthen of this weighty trust as easy to her as possible, by making it your constant study and endeavour, as I am sure it is your inclination, to preserve the peace of the kingdom, and to discountenance and suppress all attempts to raise groundless discontents in the minds of my people, whose happiness has always been and shall continue my daily and uninterrupted care."*

The secret correspondence with cardinal Fleury was scarcely closed, when a dispute between Spain and Portugal brought on another series of intricate negotiations, and threatened to spread still wider the horrors of war.†

John the Fifth, king of Portugal, had espoused the archduchess Mary Ann, sister of the Emperor Charles the Sixth, and his connection with the house of Austria, had increased the hatred

* Chandler. Journals.

† The substance of the remaining part of this chapter is principally taken from the same documents as the forty-fourth, from a second continuation of the paper, intituled, "Conduct of England, &c." from July to December, 1734, and from A "Summary Deduction of the Course of Public Affairs, from the delivery of the Project of Accommodation by the Maritime Powers, to their Approbation of the Vienna Preliminaries," from February 1735 to January 1736. Walpole Papers.

which his family bore to France. For some time after the peace of Utrecht, a great coolness had arisen between him and Philip the Fifth, the natural consequence of situation and connections. At length their jealousy and rivalry in some measure subsided, and the two courts were reconciled by a double marriage, between Ferdinand, prince of Asturias, and Barbara, infanta of Portugal, and between Joseph, prince of Brasil, and the infanta of Spain. But these marriages did not long operate in preserving harmony, and a diplomatic dispute nearly produced an open rupture.

The servants of Don Cabral de Belmonte, the Portuguese minister at Madrid, being accused of violently rescuing a malefactor from the officers of justice, were arrested and carried to prison. The minister having complained of this insult, as an infraction on the law of nations, was warmly supported by his court. At the same time the Spanish embassador at Lisbon, demanded satisfaction for the behaviour of the Portuguese minister, but instead of obtaining redress, he had the mortification of seeing nineteen of his own domestics arrested; and as neither court would give the satisfaction reciprocally demanded, the two ministers retired from their respective embassies, and both nations prepared for immediate hostilities.

Azevedo, envoy from the king of Portugal, arrived at London, to solicit in virtue of the subsisting treaties, and particularly that of 1703, the assistance of England in favour of the

king of Portugal, against an attack which he apprehended from Spain. To this demand the king returned for answer, that he would, agreeably to the tenour of his engagements, in conjunction with the States General, interpose his good offices; and that in the mean time, to secure Portugal from any hostile attempt, especially against the Brazil fleet, which was then on its return, a strong squadron should be sent to Lisbon. He at the same time advised the king of Portugal to show a readiness in bringing this dispute to an accommodation.

This advice was by no means acceptable to the king of Portugal. He had seen with a jealous eye the recent successes of the Spaniards in Italy; he had beheld, not without regret, an advantageous peace which Philip had lately concluded with the Moors; and he expected, perhaps, that Spain would again revive pretensions on Portugal, which, notwithstanding all renunciations, had never been sincerely relinquished. During the war he had uniformly approved the conduct of the Emperor; and persons of all ranks and distinctions in Portugal, had expressed their wishes in favour of the same cause. He was still farther exasperated against the court of Madrid, by the repeated complaints of his favourite daughter Barbara, of the ill treatment which she received from the queen of Spain. These concurrent circumstances roused the resentment of John the Fifth, a prince of great spirit. He was eager to commence hostilities against Spain, and warmly solicited both Eng-

land and the Emperor, to conclude an offensive alliance. On the 17th of April, he said to lord Tyrawley,* the British embassador at Lisbon, the time was now arrived to reduce Philip to reason; that so favourable an opportunity would never again occur; Spain was left in so defenceless a state, by the numerous armies employed in Italy, that a small number of Portuguese would overrun the country, without opposition; and the British fleet would prevent the return of the Spanish troops from Italy. His confidential ministers publicly declared, that if manifestos from the prince of Asturias were dispersed, inviting the Spaniards to shake off the tyranny of the queen, who had profited by the incapacity of the king, the whole kingdom would rise in his favour. And with a view to induce England to embrace this measure, it was urged, if the attempt of the prince of Asturias succeeded, Philip would be compelled to recall his troops from Italy, for the defence of his own kingdom; and the force of the allies being weakened, the Imperial troops might again acquire the ascendancy, and the house of Bourbon be frustrated in its attempts to lower that of Austria.

The negotiations concerning the disputes between Spain and Portugal, were necessarily blended with those between the Emperor and the allies. The Emperor received the offers of Portugal with avidity, and gave unbounded pro-

* Walpole Papers. Lord Tyrawley to the duke of Newcastle, May 19, 1735.

mises of the most effectual assistance; trusting that if hostilities should take place between Spain and Portugal, England would be drawn into the quarrel, and a general war would be the unavoidable consequence. So great was the difficulty of reconciling two courts, both remarkable for pride and etiquette, and two sovereigns equally intemperate in their anger, and so impossible did it appear to foresee the consequences or control the events, that a general and bloody war seemed almost inevitable. "Affairs wear so gloomy an aspect," says Horace Walpole, in a letter to his brother, "I own I see nothing but black clouds gathering on all sides: I don't see a ray of light to disperse them."*

But Sir Robert Walpole did not behold things in so discouraging a light, and the British cabinet, directed by him, acted with no less spirit than caution. In the beginning of June, a squadron of twenty-five ships of the line and several frigates sailed from Portsmouth, under the command of Sir John Norris, and arrived in the Port of Lisbon. The destination of this fleet produced a strong sensation at Paris and Madrid, and gave great weight to the armed mediation of England. Cardinal Fleury was particularly alarmed; he represented to lord Waldegrave,† in the most pathetic manner, that when the king of Portugal should see so *terrible a fleet* as twenty-five men of war, come to his assistance,

* April 29th, 1735. Correspondence.

† Earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, June 1st, 1735. Correspondence.

he would reject all offers of mediation. The friends of the Emperor at Lisbon would encourage him to attack Spain; Spain would be defended by France, and Portugal by England, and a general war, of which no one could see the bounds, or calculate the effects, would be the inevitable consequence. The British cabinet was not affected with these remonstrances. The squadron was not withdrawn; but a strong representation was made to the courts of Spain and France, that its object was only to protect the trade of the English subjects, and to defend the coast and commerce of Portugal against any attempt; that Sir John Norris was instructed not to act offensively, nor to assist the king of Portugal in offensive measures.*

This spirited conduct rendered the ministry extremely popular in England, and greatly contributed to restore the tranquillity of Europe.† Spain having at first declined the proferred interposition, proposed at length to refer the decision of the differences to England and France; and Portugal, after making ineffectual endeavours to prevail on England to act offensively, finally acquiesced in the mediation of France and the maritime powers. Hostilities, though begun in America against the Portuguese colony of St. Sacrament, never reached Europe. A convention, signed at Madrid in July, 1736, under the mediation of the English, French, and Dutch

* Mr. Keene to the duke of Newcastle, June 9th, 1735. Keene Papers.

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 292.

plenipotentiaries, was followed by a peace, concluded at Paris, by which all differences were adjusted.*

A short time before the Portuguese minister solicited the assistance of England, the Imperial court delivered an answer to the plan of pacification; but this answer was only provisional, and the acceptance of the armistice was restrained to such conditions as rendered it inadmissible. It concluded by exhorting the maritime powers to prepare for acting offensively, if the allies should reject the plan. The Emperor,† at the same time, stated the right which he had acquired, as well by the treaties made in 1731, as by his conduct since that period, to the friendship and assistance of the maritime powers, against the unjust attacks and ambitious views of the house of Bourbon,‡ and made the most bitter reflections upon the unmanly and pusillanimous part, which those powers, especially the Dutch, had acted since the rupture. It was now evident that the Emperor would not hearken to any overtures of accommodation from the maritime powers, unless they promised to assist him, if the allies rejected the plan. They deemed it necessary therefore to declare, in the most positive terms, that they would not on any consideration engage in the war; and represented to the Imperial court, the necessity

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 16, 1736.

† Memoire raisonnée, March 15. Grantham Papers.

‡ Deduction.

of entering into a particular accommodation with Spain or France; with Spain, by giving in marriage an archduchess to Don Carlos, or with France by exchanging Loraine for Tuscany. To this representation no immediate answer was given.

The notification to the Imperial court, in answer to the memorial delivered by count Ulefeldt, that England and Holland declined taking a part in the war, was received at Vienna with the strongest symptoms of surprise and despondency. All that Mr. Robinson could draw from them, was sullen and abrupt declarations of astonishment and affliction, to see the Emperor thus abandoned by the very power from whom he principally and solely expected assistance. Bartenstein,* the confidential, though subordinate minister of Charles the Sixth, said, that Europe was lost, and the Emperor was the first sacrifice. He knew, were he Emperor, what part he should take; he would let things follow their own course. The war would end of itself for want of matter to feed the flame. The enemies of the house of Austria would surely not require Vienna; with his hereditary countries the Emperor would still be sufficiently great for himself, though not useful to others.

Prince Eugene also observed, that the wisest measure which the Emperor could pursue was, to recall all his forces into his hereditary dominions, and suffer France to take the rest, if the

* Walpole Papers. Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, July 5th, 1735.

maritime powers had no concern for them. But it was count Sinzendorff, who on this, as on all other occasions, used the most violent expressions of passion and fury. Having asked the British minister, if no succours were to be expected, and receiving for answer, that in all probability there were none, he exclaimed, "What a severe sentence have you passed upon the Emperor! No malefactor was ever carried with so hard a doom to the gibbet." He was for burning Amsterdam, and for giving up Flanders; "there was, and there could be," he added, "no separate negotiation. The only means left for the Emperor was, to set fire to the four corners of the world, and to perish, if he must perish, in the general conflagration."

These violent expressions of indignation and despair, were soon followed by a suitable conduct; the Emperor was alarmed at the negotiations of France, Sweden, and Turkey; at the union, concert, and progress of the allies in Italy; at the retreat of count Konigsegg into the Tyrol, which left Mantua to its fate.

He attributed to the treaty of 1731 all his misfortunes, which arose from a determined resolution of the French to destroy his succession, guarantied by that treaty, and principally to the introduction of the 6,000 Spaniards into Italy; which enabled the French to gain over the king of Sardinia. Thus abandoned by his allies, he determined to separate himself from the maritime powers, and ordered count Kinski

to express his extreme astonishment at the conduct of England, and to affirm, that he had no other alternative of accommodation than to submit to his enemies, when deserted by his friends.

In this situation of affairs, the mind of the Emperor was secretly agitated to such a height, as to raise apprehensions in the Empress, that his understanding might be affected by the conflict. "During the dead of the night," writes Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, "and while he was singly with her, he gave a loose to his affliction, confusion, and despair." These agitations were augmented by a total distrust of his own ministers, excepting Bartenstein, who having less to lose than the others, flattered the Emperor with ideas more suitable to romantic glory, than to ordinary prudence. "This court," he adds, "is desperate, and no prudent man can foresee what may be the effect of a violent despair. The Emperor, as in a shipwreck, will lay hold on the first plank."

The same sentiments were enforced by count Kinski,* in an audience of the king at Hanover, July 27, 1735. He represented the situation and strength of the Imperial troops, and desired his opinion upon the best method of employing them, either by sending large detachments into Italy, or by abandoning that territory, except Mantua, and the passes into the Tyrol; by collecting an army on the Rhine, to act offensively

* Lord Harrington to the duke of Newcastle, Walpole Papers. Deduction.

against France; or, lastly, by penetrating into France, on the side of the Moselle and the Netherlands. He required at the same time a precise declaration of the king's final intentions on the point of succours, and declared, that the Emperor would consider a delay or silence on this question, as an absolute negative; and must then provide, as soon and as well as he could, for himself, by way of negotiation, without consulting the maritime powers, or considering their interests. A demand was at the same time made for a subsidy, either public or secret, which would enable him to support a large army in the field, and to lure the king of Sardinia from the party of France and Spain.

While the Emperor was thus appealing to the hopes and fears of the maritime powers, and warmly soliciting succours and subsidies, he threatened to abandon the Low Countries, and even cede them to France, for the recovery of his Italian dominions, and the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction. This threat excited strong apprehensions in the British cabinet, and was deprecated as an event of the utmost consequence to the commercial and political interests of England.

Mean time the British cabinet were employed in endeavouring to divide the allies, and in renewing solicitations for peace, even to the very power by which they had been recently duped and deceived. Sir Robert Walpole was conscious that the only hopes of pacification depended on France, and if she could be brought

to a sincere co-operation with England, the other belligerent powers, however averse, could not withhold their assent. He was desirous not to offend the cardinal, by showing disgust at his duplicity. He wished not to be precipitate in divulging the account of the secret negotiation; and thought that the publication of that transaction should rather be the consequence, than the forerunner or provocation of a war.* He was fully convinced, from his knowledge of the cardinal's and Chauvelin's characters, that unless the points of concession originated with them, France would never be brought to guaranty the Pragmatic Sanction, which he considered as essentially necessary to the preservation of tranquillity in Europe. He was aware that the desperate situation of the Emperor's affairs in Italy, and his unwillingness to act cordially with the maritime powers, increased the difficulty of obtaining an accommodation, and that a peace would be cheaply purchased by suffering France to acquire Loraine, provided Tuscany was given in exchange to the duke of Loraine, the Milanese restored, and Parma and Placentia ceded to the Emperor, in return for the two Sicilies.†

In conformity with these views, Horace Walpole hinted, in a dispatch to lord Waldegrave, the circulation of a rumour in Paris, that the

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, $\frac{2}{10}$th May 1735. Correspondence.

† Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, April $\frac{1}{12}$th 1735. Correspondence.

object of France was, the acquisition of Loraine, in exchange for Tuscany. Lord Waldegrave, in a conference with the cardinal, casually mentioned this report. The extreme pleasure which this hint gave, the pains he took in setting forth its expediency, and obviating all objections, sufficiently proved that this was the great point which France had in view.*

While England thus exerted herself in favour of a pacification, and endeavoured to persuade the Emperor and France to agree to terms of accommodation without the knowledge of the other powers, a secret negotiation was opened between the Emperor and France without her concurrence. At the time that cardinal Fleury was holding the private correspondence, with Horace Walpole, he made secret overtures to the Emperor, with the hopes of detaching him from the maritime powers. In his anniversary letter† of compliment on occasion of the new year, dated December 12, 1734, he had added a postscript in his own hand, expressing, in the strongest terms, his affection and respect for the Emperor's person, as well as an earnest desire to see the peace of Europe restored. The Emperor, besides the usual chancery letter, returned an answer in his own hand, dated February 16th, to the said postscript, declaring his readiness, in conjunc-

* The earl of Waldegrave to lord Harrington, June 7th, 1735. Walpole and Waldegrave Papers.

† Walpole Papers. Summary Deduction.

tion with his allies, to listen to terms of amity, if the cardinal would heartily promote a peace. These two letters were put into the hand of the Pope's nuncio at Brussels, to convey them to the cardinal; who, in opening the nuncio's packet (for he opened all his letters at arms length, and in the chimney) dropt the Emperor's particular letter into the fire, and could not recover it before it was defaced. The cardinal informed the nuncio, by a letter of March 10th, of this accident, and expressed his shame and concern; but Charles considering this story as a mere fiction to excuse his silence, the correspondence was interrupted.

Soon after this incident, the Emperor, finding all attempts to induce the maritime powers to act offensively against France ineffectual, artfully made distant overtures to Spain, in relation to the marriage of an archduchess with Don Carlos, with the approbation of England. The dread of a similar union between Spain and Austria to that which took place in 1725, alarmed the cardinal; and he accordingly secretly conveyed to count Sinzendorff his wishes to conclude a peace, directly with the Emperor, without the intervention of any other power, and added, that he would either depute a person of confidence to Vienna, or the Emperor might send one to Paris, for the purpose of settling the conditions.

The offer was accepted, and at the very moment when the cardinal was luring the British

cabinet with the hopes of opening, under their auspices, a negotiation with the Emperor, he dispatched his agent, la Beaume, to Vienna. This transaction was carried on so secretly, that although some suspicions were entertained; yet the first vague rumour of the mission was communicated by the earl of Waldegrave, on the second of August,* which he had casually derived from a spy in the secretary of state's office at Paris. When he taxed the cardinal with duplicity, the hoary minister did not blush to deny the fact; and because the negotiation was at that moment suspended, offered in the most solemn manner to take an oath on the Bible,† that no private negotiation was at that time pending between France and Austria. La Beaume actually passed through the army, and after holding a conference with prince Eugene, arrived, and had continued five weeks at Vienna, before Mr. Robinson‡ entertained the slightest suspicion of the fact. The first intimation which he received from lord Harrington, appeared to him an uncertain report, and it was not till after much minute inquiry, that he found the information to be true.

Although the king, in his reply to Kinski, had declared that he would not take upon himself to give any advice, and had urged that it

* Walpole Papers. The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, August 2, 1735. Correspondence.

† The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, September 28, 1735. Correspondence.

‡ Walpole and Grantham Papers.

would be extremely difficult to enter into the war without the concurrence of the Dutch; although he hinted at the several schemes of a separate negotiation; thought the exchange of the duchies of Loraine and Tuscany preferable; insinuated the readiness of Spain to accept the second archduchess, and offered to assist in forwarding the match, or to adopt any other method for the purpose of effecting a pacification; yet the Emperor, well aware that the king was strongly inclined to afford active assistance, urged his claim with redoubled warmth.

The earnest solicitations of the Emperor, his threats to abandon the Low Countries, and the knowledge of his secret negotiation with France, made a strong impression on the king and cabinet, and gave weight to the opinion of that party which inclined for war. For it was deemed far more eligible to encounter hostilities, than by a refusal of succours to throw the house of Austria into the arms of France, or by permitting the diminution of her territories, to enfeeble the only power which could effectually present a barrier to the encroachments of the house of Bourbon.

This desertion of Austria in her extreme distress, gave great displeasure to several of the minister's friends and co-adjutors, and to none more than to lord Harrington, who, in his capacity of secretary of state, had the mortification to send instructions, and to forward measures contrary to his own sentiments. "The reasons," he observes, in a letter to Horace Walpole,

"you allege to prove that the treaty of Seville was not the cause of the Emperor's misfortunes, are unanswerable, and I wish you could suggest as good ones (in case we are forced to it) for justifying to the Emperor our not assisting him; or even to justify it to ourselves and our country; considering the present behaviour, and operations of France and her allies, nothing but the most absolute inability can do it."*

In a subsequent letter, lord Harrington † even suggested a measure, which if followed, would probably have involved England in the war. It was, to propose to the Dutch, either an augmentation of their forces, or to join the king in requiring from the allies a direct specification of the conditions on which they would conclude a peace; and to declare peremptorily, that unless a positive answer was given, England and the States would decline the mediation, and adopt the necessary measures for preserving their own security, and the equilibrium of Europe. Should the States decline both these propositions, England was to withdraw from the mediation, and at the same time acquaint the Emperor, that the king would endeavour to assist him in making a separate peace with any of his enemies, and in failure of that attempt, would join with him afterwards in the war, if an opportunity should arise of doing it with success.

The difference of opinion was now so great,

* Walpole Papers. Hanover, August 7th.

† Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to Horace Walpole, Hanover, August 31.

the party for war was so warmly supported by the king, and that for peace by Sir Robert Walpole, as to occasion much indecision in the measures pursued abroad, and in the instructions sent to the foreign ministers. The French cabinet availed itself of these circumstances with considerable effect, and particularly in Holland, where Chavigny, in his passage through the Hague to Hanover, exaggerated the divided state of administration. He decried the spirited attempts made by Horace Walpole to infuse vigour into the counsels of the States General, and publicly declared, that the sentiments of the court and ministers of England, differed from the plan of pacification delivered by Horace Walpole to the States, and from the joint resolutions of the king and States, on the subject of the plan and armistice, communicated to the French embassador on the 8th of June.

Sir Robert Walpole had given weight to this opinion, in a private interview with Chavigny,* who pressed him to bring about a pacification by a secret convention between France and England. He avowed his inclination for peace, and expressed his desire to settle the terms with cardinal Fleury; but declared his own inability to carry any measure into execution. When Chavigny considered him in the light of prime minister, and argued that his known credit with the king would enable him to accomplish any point he thought necessary: "Let us suppose,"

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, June 17th, 1735. Correspondence.

replied Walpole, "that I should agree to any measure, without consulting the duke of Newcastle, who is secretary of state for the department of France, and the duke, on being informed of the transaction, should oppose it, what is to be done in that case? and what opinion would you have of me, to find things stopt, and overturned by such an opposition?"

It was impossible that affairs could long continue in this state of suspense, and that the tranquillity of Europe could be secured while the cabinet of England was distracted and embarrassed. It became, therefore, necessary for the honour of the minister, as well as for the preservation of his system, to show, that, whatever private differences might exist in the cabinet, their public opinion was decidedly in favour of pacific measures; and to undeceive the Emperor in his expectations of assistance from the maritime powers, by enforcing the necessity of a separate accommodation, either with France or Spain. These two objects were finally attained.

In this dilemma, Walpole acted with consummate address. While the official dispatches from Vienna expressed the strongest disapprobation of the secret negotiations with France, and cast the most bitter reflections on the Imperial ministers, his letters, and those of his brother Horace, breathed nothing but pacific sentiments. They * palliated the conduct of the Emperor,

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, December 9th, 1735. Correspondence.

and were anxious not to offend either him or France, by a violent and precipitate condemnation of their measures. They asserted, that although the alteration of the project from that offered by the maritime powers, was executed without the co-operation of England, and the king had just reason to complain of inattention and slight, yet as it was entirely agreeable to what England had proposed, the king could blame nothing but the form of proceeding. They observed, that it would be highly unbecoming to take offence at mere punctilious circumstances; they estimated the blessings of peace too highly to suffer etiquette to prevail over prudence, or to object to an agreement, merely because it did not exactly follow the original project. Provided peace was the result, they both repeatedly declared, it was no matter by whom or in what manner it was procured.*

But though Walpole was anxious not to disoblige the Emperor, he would not sanction his demand of succours or subsidies; and as the king and part of the cabinet appear to have strongly recommended that measure, he was firm and decisive in enforcing his pacific sentiments. At length, after much opposition and some delays, a paper was transmitted to Mr. Robinson at Vienna, which seems to have been drawn up by the minister. It stated the determined resolution of the king not to take any part in the war, to offer his intervention in favour of the

* Horace Walpole to Thomas Robinson. Walpole Papers.

Emperor, but not to send any assistance either in men or money.

Having arranged these difficult points, his opinion triumphed, and his pacific measures were adopted in their full latitude. The British cabinet now steered a steady and uniform course, no longer divided in counsels, or differing in sentiment; and their unanimous exertions were finally crowned with success.

Their aim was, to make it the interest of France to co-operate seriously in the restoration of tranquillity, by candidly agreeing to such conditions as would justify cardinal Fleury in deserting Spain, and making a separate accommodation with the Emperor; and this measure could only be effected by facilitating the cession of Loraine to France, in exchange for Tuscany, by leaving to cardinal Fleury and Chauvelin the manner of proposing it, and by submitting the specific plan to the Emperor for his approbation.

The earl of Waldegrave,* in conformity with instructions sent from the queen, drew from cardinal Fleury a specific acknowledgment of his intentions. After increasing his alarm, at a resolution of the States, which seemed to announce the adoption of more vigorous measures, he represented the calamities ready to fall upon Europe, from his dilatory and irresolute proceedings; that he foresaw nothing but ruin and destruction from beginning and then dropping ne-

* The earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, August 2nd, Correspondence.

gotiations, and substituting new projects in their place. He gradually obtained, by artful questions, a confession that the exchange of Loraine for Tuscany, was the great object of France; and finally, under a promise of the strictest secrecy, he prevailed on the cardinal to lay open his scheme for a general pacification, which, with a very few exceptions, was similar to that which had been proposed by the maritime powers. At the same time, the cardinal requested that the plan should be proposed and executed by England in concert with France; and he added, that as such a peace would be established on the foundation of justice and reason, he would abandon his allies if they did not accede.

Having thus prevailed on cardinal Fleury to acquiesce in the intervention of England, the next step was, to gain the consent of the Emperor to the terms proposed by France, to be modified by England; and this was effected with equal ability. The British minister at Vienna,* in a private audience of the Emperor, represented the concern of the king at the unfortunate events of the war, and his indefatigable zeal and ardent wishes, in desiring to put an end to the troubles of Europe. He observed, that the disappointment, which the king felt from his inability to enter into the war, was equal to that which the Emperor must have experienced in not having received that assistance he so ardently expected. He urged, that in the present situa-

* Thomas Robinson to Lord Harrington, August 26th. Walpole Papers.

tion of affairs, there seemed no other expedient, than to detach one of the allies, and to carry that project into execution in the manner most agreeable. On this point the king had expressed a desire to have the Emperor's opinion; and had been anxiously waiting for an answer. He then added, that he had now to submit to the Emperor's consideration, a strong instance of the king's confidence and friendship, which was to communicate the offer of a separate accommodation from France, nearly conformable to the plan proposed by the maritime powers, and accepted by the Emperor; the cession of Loraine to France in exchange for Tuscany, on the decease of the great duke. He concluded by saying, that the Emperor's consent to this plan would infallibly insure a successful issue.

In reply, the Emperor, after returning his grateful acknowledgments to the king for this instance of his friendship, added with much dignity, "Although I relied upon more substantial marks of friendship from the king, whose word was engaged by treaty to assist me with real succours; and although in a similar case I should not have withheld those succours, to which I stood engaged by treaty; yet I am willing to believe that the disappointment I have experienced, however fatal to myself and family, was less owing to want of inclination in the king, than to the impossibility of acting otherwise. Notwithstanding this disappointment, I will pay all imaginable deference to the advice now communicated, and will appreciate this mark of

confidence as it deserves. But as it is an affair of the highest importance and delicacy, and as the exchange does not totally depend on myself, I cannot give the previous promise which is now desired, even if I were convinced of the success; for the object under consideration is not so much what should be done, as whether it is proper to be done. I again assure you, however, that I will pay the greatest deference to the king's advice, and after I have duly reflected upon it, and consulted my council, if you desire it, I will myself give the answer."

These declarations were soon followed by various explanations from the Imperial ministers, and finally by a formal answer in writing. As far as could be gathered from the dubious and mysterious manner in which the court of Vienna enveloped their sentiments, it appeared as if the Emperor, on certain conditions, might be induced to accede to the overtures of cardinal Fleury, provided Tuscany was given unconditionally to the family of Loraine, and the king of Sardinia would accept the Langhes, instead of the Tortonese.

Amidst such discordant views as influenced the conduct of Austria and France, it was not to be expected that any condition would be finally acceded to on either side, without much altercation and delay. But it was a great advantage gained, that the contending parties seemed gradually approaching to an amicable compromise. The object of England was, secretly to assist in keeping up the intercourse recently esta-

blished between the Emperor and France, to offend neither of those powers by censuring their conduct; but on the contrary, to declare that, although the king was not unacquainted with the secret negotiation, yet so far from opposing it, he was desirous of facilitating its successful issue, if it should be found not inconsistent with the equilibrium of Europe.

The British ministers at the Imperial and French courts, were instructed to approve the basis of the agreement settled between France and the Emperor, of which they obtained certain information; and a counter project with some few alterations for preventing the cession of Loraine to France, without a sufficient indemnity, was forwarded by lord Harrington to Paris and Vienna, on the 21st of November. In consequence of this conduct, the Imperial and French courts at length acknowledged the secret negotiation, and the British embassador at Vienna received from prince Eugene, a project of the preliminary articles with which the Emperor and France were contented, and to which the concurrence of the maritime powers was desired.

The answer to this project was made in the name of Great Britain and the United Provinces. It stated, that as the preliminaries did not essentially differ from the plans before delivered, nor contain any thing detrimental to the equilibrium of Europe, the king and the Republic did not hesitate to declare their approbation and readiness to concur in a future treaty for bringing them to perfection; reserving to themselves the

liberty of stipulating the necessary security for their own possessions, rights, privileges, and commerce.

The secret negotiation had already produced very advantageous effects in Germany; it occasioned an actual, though not a formal armistice on the Rhine. The French and Imperial troops did not undertake offensive operations. Prince Eugene returned to Vienna in the month of October, and soon afterwards the two armies passed into winter quarters. But the same beneficial consequences could not take place in Italy: where the fate of the war did not wholly depend, as it did in Germany, on the *fiat* of cardinal Fleury, and where no suspension of arms could take place, without the consent of the king of Spain, who, eager to accelerate the possession of Mantua, would not easily be induced to agree to an armistice at the moment when he thought himself secure of success. But what could not be accomplished by persuasion or force, was finally effected by stratagem.

One great object of the British cabinet was, to prevent, or at least to protract the siege of Mantua, which was scantily provided with ammunition and provisions. With a view to deter the French from attempting it, Horace Walpole, in a letter to the cardinal, and baron Gedda and lord Waldegrave in their conferences, represented, that although the English had declined engaging in the war; yet they would not see the house of Austria ruined, and that if Mantua was taken, and the Austrians were

driven out of Italy, the maritime powers must come forward to their assistance. Fortunately, Mantua was the subject of contention between the allies in Italy. Philip was eager to begin the siege, conscious that the possession of that important fortress, as the key of Lombardy on the side of the Tyrol, would give to Spain the control of Italy. Cardinal Fleury himself did not attempt to conceal his apprehensions of the consequences which would result from the capture. He said to the earl of Waldegrave,* that the fall of that place into the hands of the Spaniards, would defeat all his schemes, and render the king and queen of Spain untractable. He even promised, and in this instance he did not belie his word, to order the French general in Italy to protract the opening of the trenches, and place his troops in such a manner, as to permit the entrance of provisions. The king of Sardinia went still farther, and in a letter to George the Second, declared that he was ready to join the maritime powers, if they would enter into the war.† He also expatiated on his own danger, should the possession of Mantua encourage Spain to deprive him of all the territories which had been allotted to him, by his engagements with France. He pressed the king speedily to negotiate a peace between the Emperor and the allies, as the only means of preventing his falling a

* Walpole Papers. Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, October 4, 1735. Correspondence.

† Walpole Papers. Lord Harrington to the duke of Newcastle, Hanover, August 14, 1737.

sacrifice to the resentment of Spain, for having delayed co-operating in the siege of Mantua. He declared that he would rather relinquish a part of the Milanese, that the Emperor might retain a footing in Italy, by keeping possession of Mantua, with Parma, Placentia, and Tuscany, than even obtain possession of the whole Milanese, on condition that Mantua, with the other possessions in Italy, should be ceded to Don Carlos.*

In compliance with these views, he had positively refused to furnish a single piece of artillery; and secretly obstructed every measure which tended to facilitate the capture of Mantua. By these manœuvres, the siege was protracted until the season was too far advanced; and Philip was thus prevented from gaining a preponderance in Italy, which would have rendered him too powerful in that quarter, and have encouraged him to refuse all conditions of peace, which did not confirm the total exclusion of the Emperor.

During this whole transaction, cardinal Fleury was kept in continual alarm, by repeated insinuations from Horace Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, that the Dutch would act with vigour, provided France would not accede to honourable terms.† They also made continued representations to him, that the Emperor, if rendered desperate, would throw himself into the

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Harrington, June 6, 1735. Walpole Papers.

† Horace Walpole's Apology.

arms of Spain, and agree to the marriage of Don Carlos with an archduchess, which the French minister seemed to deprecate as much, or even more than the king of England. For the same purpose, the British cabinet never ceased making overtures, both to the Emperor and Spain, in favour of the marriages; and this business was so artfully managed, that though it was conducted under the appearance of the strictest secrecy; yet it was duly communicated to the cardinal, in the manner the most likely to alarm him.

The cardinal had no sooner agreed to a separate accommodation with the Emperor, and a secret convention with England, than the recollection of his former insincerity in his correspondence with Horace Walpole, and the influence of Chauvelin over him, induced the British cabinet to keep him steady to his engagements, by opposing art to art, and intrigue to intrigue. They availed themselves of his apprehensions of a rupture with Spain, and of his dread lest a close union should be formed between Spain and England. Mr. Keene, the English minister at Madrid, executed, with much address, the instructions of his court on this head. From the time of the first official communications from cardinal Fleury, of the secret accommodation between France and the Emperor, and the partial suspension of arms in Italy, without the knowledge or consent of Spain, he had artfully fomented the resentment which the court of Madrid entertained against France, for deserting

and betraying the common cause. He wrought upon the irritable and punctilious disposition of Philip the Fifth, who was piqued at being betrayed by his native country; he increased while he affected to allay, the ungovernable fury of the queen, who aspired to make her son, Don Carlos, master of Italy, and who considered the disposal of Parma and Tuscany to the Emperor, as an injurious deprivation of her own inheritance.

The court of Spain was so irritated, that Mr. Keene observed, in a letter to the duke of Newcastle,* "There is scarce any thing that they would not do, to revenge themselves upon the French. You will easily judge of their desire to do it, when, contrary to their pride, they make such applications to the king, before they know the least of his majesty's sentiments. I wish, indeed, that matters may not have been pushed rather too far; for hitherto I found more disposition in them to sit down quietly with their mortification, if there was no remedy, than I do at present. But they now seem to be driven to despair, and to be resolved to act as people in that state."

Even Don Joseph Patiño, the first minister, who was so mysterious, that according to cardinal Fleury, he always spoke as well as wrote † in cypher, indignantly proposed, in unambiguous terms, to undermine the French commerce with

* Madrid, December 10, 1735. Keene Papers.

† The Earl of Waldegrave to the duke of Newcastle, October 28, 1733.

Spain, and particularly that with the Indies, by increasing the English trade; "and thus we shall," as he observed to the British minister at Madrid,* "revenge ourselves upon the cardinal in the most easy and effectual manner and kill him *with a skain of cotton.*"†

The British cabinet, long accustomed to the violent and changeful temper of the court of Madrid; and well knowing that the king, though alienated by temporary displeasure, was from principle and interest attached to France, amicably deprecated these counsels, and urged the sound policy as well as necessity of acceding to the preliminaries.

The result of all these wisely combined measures was, the signature of preliminaries for a general pacification, which was concluded on such favourable terms, that even lord Bolingbroke, the implacable enemy of Sir Robert Walpole, observed; "If the English ministers "had any hand in it, they were wiser than I "thought them; and if not, they are much "luckier than they deserve to be."‡

The opinion which truth extorted unwillingly from lord Bolingbroke, that the terms of the preliminaries were as just and honourable as the circumstances would permit, seems to have been the opinion of the greater part of the nation; for the annals of England give no instance of a

* Benjamin Keene to the duke of Newcastle, November 28. Keene Papers.

† Un bâton de coton.

‡ Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole, December 23, January 3, 1735. Correspondence.

session in parliament which passed with so little opposition in regard to foreign affairs, as that in the commencement of 1736. With becoming pride and satisfaction, for having settled the great outlines of a general peace, the speech from the throne on the 15th of January expressed the pacific sentiments of the minister, that provided peace was made, it was no object of consideration by whom, or in what manner. After mentioning the happy turn which the affairs of Europe had taken, and after observing, that a plan of pacification had been proposed by the king, in conjunction with the States, and that the Emperor and France had separately concerted the preliminaries, the king said: "It appearing, upon due examination, that these articles do not essentially vary from the plan proposed by me and the States, nor contain any thing prejudicial to the equilibrium of Europe, or to the rights and interests of our respective subjects, we thought fit, in pursuance of our constant purpose, to contribute our utmost towards a pacification; to declare, by a joint resolution, to the courts of Vienna and France, our approbation of the said preliminaries, and our readiness to concur in a treaty for bringing them to perfection."

As an infallible symptom of peace, he noticed, that a considerable reduction would be made both by sea and land, and concluded with this pathetic exhortation to moderation and harmony at home: "I am willing to hope, this pleasing prospect of peace abroad, will greatly contribute

to peace and good harmony at home. Let that example of temper and moderation, which has so happily calmed the spirits of contending princes, banish from among you all intestine discord and dissention. Those who truly wish the peace and prosperity of their country, can never have a more favourable opportunity than now offers, of distinguishing themselves, by declaring their satisfaction in the progress already made, towards restoring the public tranquillity, and in promoting what is still necessary to bring it to perfection."*

On this occasion, the address was carried in the house of commons, not only without a division, but without the smallest opposition, and the session ended with scarcely a single reflection on the conduct of foreign affairs; a singular phenomenon in the political annals of this country.

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 103, 104. Journals.

CHAPTER 46.

1736.

Parliamentary Proceedings—Gin Act—Motion to repeal the Test Act, negatived—Bill for the Relief of the Quakers passes the Commons, but is thrown out by the Lords—Account of Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London—Prorogation—Horace Walpole declines the Office of Secretary of State—Accompanies the King to Hanover, as Vice Secretary—Foreign Negotiations—Prudence of Sir Robert Walpole—Private Correspondence with his Brother—Objects to guaranty the Provisional Succession to Berg and Juliers—Opposes the Northern League, and the Mediation between Russia and the Porte—Promotes the definitive Treaty—The Delays of the Emperor—Ineffectual Attempt to bribe Chauvelin—Secret Correspondence with Cardinal Fleury, and Dismission of Chauvelin.

THE parliamentary proceedings of this session, relating to domestic affairs, were, in general, of little importance. The only subjects which it may be necessary to particularize were, The *Gin Act;* the repeal of the Test Act; and the bill for giving relief to Quakers.

The act for laying a tax on spirituous liquors, and licensing the retailers, was a measure in which the minister had no immediate concern, but for which he suffered much unmerited obloquy. The bill was principally promoted by Sir Joseph Jekyl, from a spirit of philanthropy, which led him to contemplate with horror the progress of vice, licentiousness, and immorality, that marked the popular attachment to these

inflammatory poisons. This benevolent attempt embarrassed the minister, but did not answer the desired end.

It was incumbent on the minister to prevent any diminution of the revenue, and for that purpose to supply any deficiency which might arise from the reduced consumption of spirituous liquors; but this attention to his official duty, exposed him to much intemperate abuse, and he was reproached for wishing to sacrifice the morals of the people, to financial considerations. After many debates, in which he took an active share, the bill passed, and £.70,000 per annum was granted to the king, as a compensation for the diminution of the civil list, to which the duty had hitherto belonged.*

The populace showed their disapprobation of this act, in the usual mode of riot and violence. Numerous desperados availed themselves of the popular discontents, and continued the clandestine sale of gin, in defiance of every restriction. The demand of penalties, which the offenders were unable to pay, filled the prisons, and removing every restraint, plunged them into courses more audaciously criminal. It was found, that a duty and penalty so severe as to amount to an implied prohibition, were as little calculated to benefit the public morality as the public revenue, and as Walpole predicted, a subsequent administration was obliged to modify the measure.

Few subjects were more embarrassing to the

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 172.

minister, than the proposed repeal of the test act. He had for a long time acted in favour of the dissenters; he fully appreciated the advantage which the protestant succession had derived from their exertions; he had received from them the warmest support; he knew that they had reason to expect relief from a protestant king, whom they had assisted in placing on the throne; he had even given them hopes, that the time was not far distant, when they might obtain what they so earnestly desired. In this session, the motion for repealing the test act was prematurely brought forwards, on the 2nd and 12th of March, by Plummer, who supported it in a very able speech. Though the minister opposed the motion, in the present instance, he acted with such candour and moderation, and, "expressed himself so cautiously, with regard "to the church, and so affectionately, with re-"gard to the dissenters, that neither party had "cause to complain of him. The public has "been long informed of all the arguments urged "for and against the motion, as almost every "year produced some event that revived them; "therefore they are omitted here. The motion, "was negatived by a majority of 251 against "123."*

Although the minister thus opposed the repeal of the test act, he warmly patronised and supported a bill for the relief of the Quakers, who presented a petition to the house of commons on the 2nd of March. It stated, "that not-

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 323. Journals.

withstanding the several acts of parliament made, for the more easy recovery of tithes, and ecclesiastical dues, in a summary way, by warrant from justices of the peace; yet as the said people conscientiously refused the payment, they were not only liable to, but many of them had undergone grievous sufferings, by prosecutions in the exchequer, ecclesiastical, and other courts, to the imprisonment of their persons, and the impoverishing and ruin of them and their families, for such small sums as were recoverable by those acts. They therefore prayed, that the house would be pleased to afford them such relief, as to them should seem meet."*

Though the minister and the majority of the house were disposed to favour the petition, and a bill was framed accordingly, yet the great interest of the established clergy, rendered it a matter of much difficulty. Counter-petitions poured in from all quarters, before the end of March, setting forth, "That such a law would be extremely prejudicial to themselves and brethren, excluding them from the benefit of the laws then in being, for the recovery of tithes and other dues, and thereby putting the clergy of the established church, upon a worse foot than the rest of his majesty's subjects; and praying to be heard by counsel against the bill."†

Notwithstanding all obstacles, the disposition of the house was very strong in favour of the

* Chandler. Journals. † Ibid.

quakers. Their petition was not considered as a party affair; and the proceedings against many of them, had such an air of persecution, as increased the number of their friends among all parties. The bill underwent great alterations in the committee. The main intention of it was, to make the determination of two justices of the peace final, as to all payments of tithes and church dues, when the quaker, who was to pay them, did not litigate the same, which the justices were to certify under their hands and seals, without fee or reward. But, should the quaker litigate the payment, then either party, who dissented from the adjudication of the justices, might have recourse to the courts in Westminster hall. The payment of all church and chapel rates, if refused by quakers, were, upon the complaint of the churchwardens, to be levied by distress, by order of two justices, upon their goods, in the same manner as the poor-rates are levied; and no quaker was to be sued or prosecuted, for not paying any church or chapel rate, in any other manner.

Such was the main purport of this famous bill, though clogged with a great number of other clauses; when after long debates, and several divisions, it passed the house of commons, by a majority of 164 against 48.*

In the upper house it was successfully opposed by the interest of the church and the law; a considerable number of courtiers were also non-contents. The two great lawyers, lord chan-

* Chandler. Journals.

cellor Talbot and lord Hardwicke, made a strong impression by observations on the incorrectness and imperfections of the bill, for the amendment of which, the short remainder of the session would not afford time. "The speakers on both sides displayed great abilities and temper, and when the question was put, for committing the bill, it passed in the negative, by a majority of 54 against 35."*

The minister was highly dissatisfied with the rejection of a bill which he was induced from various considerations to promote. He was strongly averse to all measures which bore the appearance of persecution in religious matters. His conduct was also influenced by personal considerations. A large body of quakers were established in the county of Norfolk, and particularly in the city of Norwich, who had always supported his candidates at the general elections, and he was anxious, from a principle of gratitude, to prove that he was not unmindful of past favours, and deserving of future assistance. Indeed, few circumstances, ever ruffled his temper, or affected his equanimity more than the rejection of this bill. He bitterly complained of the vindictive spirit, which reigned in the house of lords, and his resentment was principally excited against the bishop of London, to whom he attributed its defeat. That prelate had, in fact, prevailed on the bench of bishops, to give their decided opposition to the measure, and had exhorted the clergy, in all quarters of the

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 315. Lords' Debates.

kingdom, to petition against it, as highly prejudicial to the interests of the church. In consequence of these exertions, the minister, with a spirit of acrimony very unusual to him, withdrew from the learned prelate the full confidence which he had hitherto placed in him, and transferred into other hands the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs with which he had been chiefly entrusted.

Edmund Gibson was born in 1669,* and educated at the free grammar school at Bampton, in Westmoreland, the place of his nativity. At the age of seventeen, he was admitted a scholar of Queen's college, Oxford, and raised himself into early notice by various publications, which proved his classical erudition, his accurate acquaintance with the Northern languages, and a correct knowledge of the Roman and Saxon antiquities, and British topography. His great talents and extensive learning, introduced him to the patronage of archbishop Tenison, who made him librarian of Lambeth, and appointed him his domestic chaplain. By the archbishop's interest, he became precentor and residentiary of Chichester, rector of Lambeth, and archdeacon of Surry. In 1713, he gave to the public that great and laborious work, intituled, "Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani, or the Statutes, Constitutions, Canons, Rubricks, and articles of the church of England, methodically digested under their proper heads; with a commentary, historical and juridical, and an intro-

* Biographia Britannica.

ductory discourse concerning the present state of the power, discipline, and laws of the church of England, with an appendix of instruments, ancient and modern, in folio."

Being a great friend to the protestant succession, he was promoted, in 1716, to the bishopric of Lincoln, and, in 1720, translated to the see of London.

In this eminent station, he enjoyed the full confidence of the king and ministry, and was principally consulted by lord Townshend and Sir Robert Walpole, in all ecclesiastical matters, particularly during the long decline of health which incapacitated archbishop Wake from transacting business. He was always zealous in supporting the church establishment, and uniformly opposed the repeal of the test act. He declined a translation to Winchester,* and looked forwards to the primacy with such confident expectation, that he was called by Whiston, heir apparent to the see of Canterbury. These well-founded hopes were frustrated by the indignation of Walpole, for his opposition to the quaker's bill. On the decease of Wake, the see was conferred on Potter. And when, on his death, in 1747, it was offered to Gibson, he declined it on account of his advanced age and increasing infirmities.† He died on the 6th of February 1748.

* Letter from bishop Gibson to Sir Robert Walpole, Orford Papers.

† Letter from bishop Gibson to the king, communicated by the bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Douglas.)

The inveteracy displayed against this eminent prelate, for the conscientious discharge of his duty, reflects no credit on the memory of Sir Robert Walpole. His esteem for the bishop of London had been so great, that when he was reproached with giving him the authority of a pope, he replied, "And a very good pope he is."* Even after their disagreement, he never failed to pay an eulogium to the learning and integrity of his former friend.

On the 20th of May, the king put an end to this late session of parliament, by a speech, in which he acquainted both houses, "that since the preliminary articles had been concluded between the Emperor and his most Christian majesty, a further convention, concerning the execution of them, had been made and communicated by both those courts, and negotiations were carrying on by the several powers engaged in the late war, in order to settle the general pacification." He expressed himself with great concern, in relation to the seeds of dissention that had been sown amongst his people, exhorting his parliament to cultivate unanimity, and promising impartial protection to all his subjects. He then acquainted them, that being obliged that summer to visit his German dominions, he hoped that they would make the administration of the queen, whom he had resolved to appoint regent during his absence, as easy to her, as her wise conduct would render her government agreeable to them.†

* Etough's Minutes of Conversations with Sir Robert Walpole,

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 325. Journals. Chandler.

At this period, Sir Robert Walpole and his brother gave a memorable proof of their prudence and moderation. The king being dissatisfied with lord Harrington, proposed to dismiss him from the secretaryship of state, and queen Caroline offered the place to Horace Walpole. But conscious that the elevation of two brothers to the principal posts of government, would augment the jealousy and popular outcry which already prevailed, and fearful lest so important a change should increase the divisions among the ministers, he declined the offer. The king, however, would not admit lord Harrington's attendance at Hanover, and though he acquiesced in the refusal of Horace Walpole, yet insisted on his undertaking the employment of secretary of state during his residence abroad; an order which Horace Walpole, though he attempted to elude, could not venture to disobey, and he accordingly accompanied the king to Hanover.*

As the king was extremely jealous of being governed, and yet as his ignorance of the English constitution, and his natural attachment to German measures, rendered it expedient that he should be advised by those who were responsible for the administration of affairs, it became necessary to convey this advice in so delicate a manner, that he should appear to guide the reins, which were conducted by another hand. With this view, a confidential correspondence was established between the two brothers; and

* Horace Walpole's Apology.

as the king always expected to see any private letters which passed between them, an arrangement was made, that ostensible letters should be sent for the perusal of the king, and confidential ones to Horace Walpole alone. A part of this correspondence is still preserved. Those letters of Sir Robert Walpole which relate to foreign affairs, prove, as usual, his extreme caution in avoiding, as much as possible, any continental embarrassments, which were not immediately necessary to the preservation of external peace and internal tranquillity.

The letters on domestic occurrences, chiefly relate to the murder of captain Porteus; tumults in Spitalfields, on employing Irish manufacturers, and the riots on account of the gin act. They display his good sense and prudence, in endeavouring to prevent rather than punish disturbances, and yet indicate no deficiency of vigour, when it was requisite to act with spirit.*

Besides the difficult task of settling the disputes between the Emperor and the allies, which encountered continual obstructions from the discordant views of the contending powers, three foreign objects of great importance principally occupied the attention of the king at Hanover, and gave sufficient employment to the sagacity of Walpole: The regulation of the succession of Berg and Juliers; the project of a league with the northern powers; and the mediation between Russia and the Porte.

John William, duke of Cleves, Juliers, and

* See Correspondence.

Berg, dying in 1609 without issue, his dominions were claimed by the houses of Saxony, Brandenburg, and palatine Newburg. After a long contest, the disputed succession was regulated by a family compact, and divided between the great elector, Frederick William, who was descended from the eldest sister of John William, and Philip William, duke of Newburg, afterwards elector palatine, who was descended from the second sister. Frederick William obtained Cleves, La Marck, and Ravenstein; Philip William, Juliers and Berg. By the family compact, it was stipulated, that should the male issue of either branch become extinct, the whole succession should devolve on the other.

As at this period Charles, son of Philip William, having no issue, and being advanced in years, the succession of Berg and Juliers was claimed by Frederick William, king of Prussia, grandson of the great elector. But his claims were opposed by Charles Frederick, prince palatine of Sultzbach, of the collateral line of the house of palatine Newburg, as being lineally descended from the third sister of the last duke of Cleves. He accordingly remonstrated against the family compact, and was supported in his pretensions by the elector palatine, to whom he was presumptive heir. This succession had long been a favourite object of Frederick William. He was prepared to assert his pretensions with his whole force, on the death of the elector palatine, and was secure of wresting these duchies from the house of Sultzbach, had not

the latter been openly supported or secretly abetted, by other powers.

It became an object of common prudence and policy, to obviate the difficulties which were likely to arise on the death of the elector palatine, and to regulate, if possible, the provisional succession to the disputed provinces, in such a manner as to prevent the disturbance of the public peace. But the discordant views and complicated interests of the powers, who were capable of interfering with effect, gave little hopes of a successful and stable arrangement.

France had given her guaranty to the house of Sultzbach, but she had given it at a time when she was interested to secure the palatine family; and as that motive no longer operated with the same force, it was probable that she would act in conformity to the situation of affairs at the time of the vacancy.

The Emperor, with his usual duplicity, had secretly guarantied the provisional succession to both the contesting parties; but although he had lured Frederick William with the most solemn professions to support his pretensions, he was known to be secretly inclined towards the house of Sultzbach. At all events, however, he was unwilling to offend either Prussia or the palatine family, and was no less anxious than France to avoid a public declaration of his future resolutions.

The Dutch, whose territories bordered on Berg and Juliers, were peculiarly interested to prevent disturbances on the death of the elector

palatine, and extremely anxious to propose such an accommodation as should remove the apprehensions of a war. They therefore applied to the Emperor and France, and desired the king of England's concurrence to propose instant and proper measures, for obviating the troubles, by an accommodation between the contending parties, and preventing all hostile aggressions while that accommodation was negotiating.

George the Second, highly disgusted with the king of Prussia, was averse to support any measure which might tend to his aggrandisement, and could not easily be induced to guaranty his succession to Juliers and Berg, unless some advantage was stipulated for himself. For this reason, the Dutch had proposed that East Friesland, to which both he and the king of Prussia had pretensions, should, on the death of the reigning sovereign without issue, revert to George the Second as elector of Hanover, the right of maintaining a garrison in Embden being reserved to the republic. They farther recommended, that in consideration of renouncing all claim on East Friesland, such a portion of Juliers and Berg, as might be adjudged to the king of Prussia, should be secured under the guaranty of England.

The king seemed inclined to consent to these stipulations; but the minister strongly averse to complicated and distant guaranties, expressed his objections to all interference; he declared himself against prematurely agreeing to guaranty

the succession of Berg and Juliers, in which they might be left singly with the Dutch, or making any declaration which might disoblige either Prussia or the palatine family. He stated the great inconveniences which might arise from blending that affair with the general transactions then in agitation, when the Emperor and France had agreed to postpone the consideration of it, till the chief business of the present negotiation should be concluded. His opinion prevailed, and all thoughts of interference were relinquished.*

The nothern league was the object which most embarrassed the minister, and reduced him to the necessity of opposing the king's inclinations. Rosencrantz, the Danish minister at Hanover, with a view to benefit his own country, and Mr. Finch, the British envoy at Stockholm, from a desire of favouring the court, at which he was employed, had represented to the king the good policy of forming a league between the maritime powers, and Sweden, and Denmark. The king, who understood the interests of Hanover better than those of England, and who could not sufficiently appreciate the great commercial and naval principles by which the minister was actuated in forming alliances and giving guaranties, eagerly embraced, and zealously supported the scheme; and with a view

* Sir Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, June $\frac{18}{29}$, 1736. Correspondence. Thoughts on the Succession of Berg, Juliers, and East Friesland, by Horace Walpole. Walpole Papers.—History of the Succession to the Duchies of Juliers and Berg.

to keep the king of Prussia in awe, proposed* the accession of Russia. He communicated his wishes to the queen, and requested the opinion of Sir Robert Walpole in such a manner, as sufficiently proved to which side he inclined. The minister disapproved the measure, and considered it not only as highly inexpedient, but as absolutely impracticable. He was convinced that such an alliance with Sweden would offend the Czarina, unless she was invited to accede; and that her accession could not be obtained except by guarantying the possession of Livonia and Ingria, which would no less offend Sweden. In his ostensible letter to his brother, Walpole frankly stated his objections to precipitate resolutions, recommended cautious proceedings, as well as a particular attention not to offend the Emperor and Russia, and reprobated expensive and burthensome guaranties.

As the negotiation became more and more complicated, and the king seemed inclined to persevere in his opinion, Walpole prudentially insinuated, on the 15th of August, that a matter of such extreme delicacy and importance, should be transacted by an official correspondence, rather than by private letters between the king and queen. The king having approved this proposal, Horace Walpole was ordered to prepare the project, and received hints from his brother in what manner it should be drawn. Being submitted to the king, he highly approved it, and

* Horace Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, August 5. Correspondence.

was eager for the conclusion. It was then transmitted to Sir Robert Walpole for the consideration of the queen and the lords justices, and was accompanied by a paper of private observations against the treaty. The minister found this paper so convincing, that although intended for his own use, he communicated it to the queen. Convinced by the soundness of the arguments, she promised to conceal any knowledge of this paper from the king, and to declare her sentiments in conformity to that opinion. At the same time, Sir Robert Walpole wrote an ostensible letter to his brother, informing him that he should decline laying the project before the cabinet council, lest the sudden disclosure of so important a transaction, might create surprise and alarm; and proposed to delay the communication until the negotiation was farther advanced, the inclination of the northern courts sounded, and the situation of affairs more settled, "that we may see" he adds "who and who are together, before we form new schemes, that may clash with we know not whom nor how." These prudent measures were attended with the desired effect, and the king finally consented to abandon his favourite project.*

This whole transaction reflects equal honour on the minister and the king. On the minister, for frankly delivering his sentiments, and persevering in them, though opposite to those of his sovereign; on the king, for yielding to the arguments and wishes of his faithful counsellor.

* Correspondence.

Those who consider the impatience of contradiction, and pertinacity of opinion, which marked the character of George the Second, will highly appreciate the merit of his submitting to guidance, and conforming to advice, which so strongly militated against his own wishes.

In the midst of these transactions, hostilities broke out between the Russians and Turks, which, in consequence of the alliances of France and Sweden with the Turks, and of the Emperor with Russia, appeared likely to excite a general war; yet, contrary to these expectations, this event contributed more than any other cause to accelerate the pacification in Europe. The Emperor, divided between the fear of irritating the Czarina on one hand, or of retarding the peace on the other, and tempted with the hope of sharing the spoils of the Turks, became less averse to the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon.

A mediation between the contending powers had been proposed by Calkoen, the Dutch minister at Constantinople, and too eagerly adopted by the English embassador, Sir Everard Fawkener. Walpole was apprehensive lest the Czarina should construe a premature officiousness into a partiality for the Porte, and consider it as an attempt to stop the career of that success with which her arms were crowned. He was alarmed, lest the dignity of England should be lowered by offering the mediation before it was desired, and without a certainty that it would be accepted. He was convinced, that any attempt to recon-

cile Russia and the Porte, would be fruitless and ineffectual; and he observed, in a letter to Horace Walpole, "For my part, I think you may as well hope to break in upon the constancy of two lovers in the honeymoon, as to stop the career of two powers just engaged in war, in the heat of their resentment, and before they have had time to feel, to reflect, and grow cool."* His advice prevailed also in this instance, and the mediation was declined.

The signature of the preliminaries between France and the Emperor, did not, however, produce an immediate pacification. Several months elapsed before the kings of Sardinia and Spain could be induced to accede; and when their reluctant concurrence was obtained, disputes occasionally revived between France and the Emperor, and a long series of negotiations, took place before the final ratification.

Nor are these delays to be attributed solely to the allies. The Emperor, though a prince of high spirit, and by no means deficient in capacity, was of such a changeful and capricious temper, and appeared so different at different intervals, that to define his real character and situation, confounded the wisdom of the wisest, and baffled the conjectures of the most enlightened.

At one time he was so exasperated with England, that he threatened to separate himself from her for ever, and was so devoted to France, as to induce Mr. Robinson to observe, in a letter to

* Sir Robert Walpole to Horace Walpole, August ⅓, 1736. Correspondence.

lord Harrington, June 20, "This court is too much in the hands of that of Versailles, not to do every thing that the other wills, or to do any thing that the other wills not." At another time he courted England with the utmost eagerness; denounced the house of Bourbon as his irreconcileable enemy, and offended cardinal Fleury by the most arrogant and presumptuous demeanour. With a prince of such a changeful temper, it was no easy task to negotiate. His ministers were no less intractable; and Vienna exhibited a motley scene of pride, humility, cabal, intrigue, haste and procrastination.

Another great difficulty arose from Francis duke of Loraine, who had espoused the eldest archduchess, Maria Theresa, and was unwilling to renounce his family inheritance. He required, that if Loraine was ceded to France, before the death of the grand duke of Tuscany, an adequate compensation should be secured to him. Mr. Robinson, in one of his dispatches, gives a pathetic and interesting account of his extreme distress and agitation on this occasion.* "In an audience which I demanded of him, to announce the marriage of the prince of Wales with the princess of Saxe Gotha, he interrupted me in the midst of his compliments, to pour out his joy at the marriage, and his respect and veneration for the king, which he first expressed aloud. But lest any of his attendants in the next room might overhear, he retreated with me

* Mr. Robinson to lord Harrington, May 30th, 1736. Walpole Papers.

to a window at the farther end of the apartment, and said with the greatest emotion, 'Good God, where are you, where are the maritime powers! As for my part,' he continued, 'I 'rely upon the king singly, not upon treaties, 'not upon formal promises, but upon what his 'majesty has told me over and over again of his 'goodness for me by word of mouth.' If his words expressed the highest agony and distress, his gestures and actions expressed no less: "He threw himself, in a reclining posture, and in an inconsolable manner, upon the arms and end of an adjourning table and chair." "Such also," adds Mr. Robinson, "is the extreme agitation of his mind, that his health is affected by it; he owns that he has no friend to look up to, and that next to God and the Emperor, all his fortune depends on the king of England."

Perhaps these complicated disputes would never have been settled without another war, had not the pacific spirit of Walpole and Fleury interposed, and had not the Emperor, eager to make war against the Turks, with a view to indemnify himself on the side of Bosnia, for the loss of Naples and Sicily, found it previously necessary to secure the peace of Italy, that he might draw his troops into Hungary.

The French, aware of his inclination, refused, under various pretences, to evacuate the Milanese; the Emperor was induced to make repeated concessions, and finally to yield the immediate possession of Loraine, for the eventual succession of Tuscany. He was so eager

to conclude the definitive treaty, that he paid 600,000 florins more than he had stipulated. He gave to the king of Sardinia, estates among the Langhes, as fiefs of the empire, which never belonged to the empire, and suffered that monarch to mark the limits of his dominions, according to his own conveniency.*

In the course of these various negotiations, Walpole had used every effort to conciliate discordant parties, and to effect a general accommodation. He well knew that the great obstacles to a general peace, proceeded from the intrigues of Chauvelin, who, from the time of his appointment to the office of secretary of state, and keeper of the seals, almost invariably used the ascendancy which he had gained over cardinal Fleury, in counteracting the designs of England. To obtain his co-operation, Walpole directed his principal attention, and even adopted the chimerical project of bribing him to compliance. The prospect of success was principally founded on the extravagance of Chauvelin. He lived in a style of great profusion. He had laid out, and continued to expend large sums in beautifying his favourite villa of Gros Bois, which vied in magnificence with the royal palaces.

With whom or in what manner the scheme originated, the papers under my inspection do not supply specific information. Sir Robert Walpole was too cautious to make such attempt, had not some favourable circumstance occurred.

* Thomas Robinson to lord Harrington, August 5. Grantham Papers.

It is not improbable that a hint imparted by Trevor, and insinuated in a letter from Horace Walpole to queen Caroline, might have suggested the first idea. * It was an experiment which the minister deemed it imprudent to reject, though he never entertained sanguine hopes of success. Perhaps the first opening was afforded by Chauvelin himself, who, to support his own declining interest, was desirous of securing the assistance of Sir Robert Walpole, with whom Fleury was anxious to co-operate in establishing the peace of Europe. But he had no sooner effected a temporary re-establishment of his credit, than he discontinued this private correspondence, rejected all pecuniary gratifications, refused to communicate farther information, and became, as before, the inveterate enemy to England.

The commencement, progress, and termination of this intrigue, are detailed in the private correspondence which passed between Sir Robert Walpole, and the earl of Waldegrave, and was communicated only to the king. In the succeeding year, Chauvelin made another attempt to renew his secret overtures, in such a manner as induced the earl of Waldegrave to conclude, that he would accept a bribe. Walpole wrote to the English embassador, to avoid being again deceived; to offer a large bribe, of not less than £. 5 or 10,000, and if that was not accepted, to obtain the removal of one whom he calls our

* Horace Walpole to queen Caroline, August ½, 1735. Correspondence.

quondam friend, but now our greatest enemy.* After declaring his inability to form a correct opinion at a distance, he adds, "Your lordship, who is upon the spot, can best observe and judge if he is falling; and you can do it with safety. You must strike whilst the iron is hot; and if you can venture, and can succeed with the old man, you cannot do a greater piece of service. In the mean time, as all who play fair with sharpers are certainly undone, you must pay dissimulation with dissimulation, and be as civil to him, as he can possibly be to you. But I am giving your lordship instructions, who have shown you do not want them. You know the plea, and I dare say will miss no fair opportunity."†

While this intrigue was in agitation, cardinal Fleury, in a confidential conversation with the earl of Waldegrave, made heavy complaints against the conduct of the British ministers abroad, and proposed, through the channel of Horace Walpole alone, an alliance with England,‡ to check the ambitious designs of the Emperor, and curb the restless spirit of the queen of Spain, who had so often convulsed Europe to aggrandise her own family. The answer of Horace Walpole began with a spirited remonstrance against the weakness of the cardinal, in

* Sir Robert Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, September 26, 1726. Correspondence.

† Sir Robert Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, September 26, 1726. Correspondence, vol. 3, p. 448.

‡ Horace Walpole to the earl of Waldegrave, August 8-19th, 1735. Correspondence.

listening to all the idle and malicious reports of those who endeavoured to sow dissentions between the two crowns. He stated the impossibility of acceding to the proposal of a particular union with France at the present juncture, because Chauvelin would obstruct and disappoint all hopes of bringing it to a successful issue. He concluded with representing, that the king had always had in view the preservation of the tranquillity and equilibrium of Europe; that the numerous treaties which France had made before the late troubles, and the complicated negotiations for the execution of the preliminaries, in which the king had not participated, rendered it impossible to determine what measures or alliances would be most proper for preserving the balance of power, until the whole plan of the league should be proposed; and that if the plan should appear conformable to that great end, the king would support it by every means in his power. He concluded with representing, that the cardinal would always find the king disposed to preserve a good understanding with France.

Foiled in this attempt, the cardinal endeavoured to succeed, by opening a private correspondence with Sir Robert Walpole, the knowledge of whose pacific sentiments, inspired him with the hope of imposing upon him, and drawing him in gradually to abet the alliance with France, and by that means to separate the Emperor still more from England. Two conversations which the cardinal held with the earl of

Waldegrave on this subject, will serve to show the art with which he endeavoured to amuse the British cabinet.*

After delivering his sentiments on the murder of captain Porteous, and recommending lenity to the misled populace, who were concerned in that transaction, he represented the necessity of curbing the overgrown power of the Emperor; hinted as his opinion, to be solely communicated to Sir Robert Walpole, that the best method of effecting that end, would be a league of the protestant princes in Europe, to be proposed by England, and supported by France. In reply to these friendly communications, the minister commissioned lord Waldegrave to express great respect for the cardinal, and an earnest desire to cultivate his friendship, for the mutual honour and interest of the two kingdoms. At this, the cardinal interrupting him, expressed the highest opinion of Sir Robert Walpole's distinguished abilities, and particularly expatiated on his integrity and spirit, characteristics highly necessary in the composition of a great minister. He then proposed a secret correspondence, through the channel of the earl of Waldegrave, to which, in France, no one should be privy but the king, and in England, only the king and queen; trusting on his part, that no advantage would be taken, and no hints given of this intercourse.

Although Sir Robert Walpole was not ignorant, that during these overtures, the cardinal had

* The earl of Waldegrave's letters to Sir Robert Walpole, October 23d, and November 21st, 1736. Correspondence.

been endeavouring to persuade the Emperor to conclude a definitive treaty, exclusive of the maritime powers, he neither reproached him for his insincerity, nor declined the offer of a confidential communication. He on the contrary affected to disbelive, while he hinted the report, because, he said it contradicted the declarations so frequently and solemnly made by the cardinal, that the maritime powers should be included in all the definitive transactions for a treaty, as also, because he did not doubt his sincerity in desiring a particular alliance with England. Uniformly attached to his grand principle of promoting peace by whomsoever, or in whatever manner it was effected; he expressed his readiness to concur in all measures which might be just and honourable to the two nations, and requested him to draw up the heads of a definitive treaty.

Although the earl of Waldegrave justly remarked, from his knowledge of the cardinal's character, that much could not be concluded from these private transactions, they served, however, to preserve harmony, and to soften the immediate effects of that inveterate jealousy which had so long divided the two nations. The mutual interchange of friendly discussion strengthened the pacific sentiments adopted by both ministers, and prevented the hasty renewal of offensive measures. The outlines of the definitive treaty were settled, and the conclusion of the general pacification accelerated.

Another considerable advantage was also un-

questionably derived from this private transaction. It gave to Sir Robert Walpole and the earl of Waldegrave, opportunities of representing the malicious conduct of Chauvelin, and occasioned, or hastened his downfal, which took place in the commencement of the ensuing year, and to which the representations of Waldegrave greatly contributed.

Before the dismission of Chauvelin, an interesting correspondence had passed between the two brothers and the other ministers, relating to a curious incident that happened to the earl of Waldegrave at Paris. Chauvelin having, among other papers, by mistake, put into his hands a letter from the Pretender, the embassador sent it by a courier to the queen. Immediate information was forwarded by Newcastle to the king at Hanover, with the remarks of Sir Robert Walpole. Several letters passed between the minister in London, Horace Walpole at Hanover, and the earl of Waldegrave at Paris, which prove the extreme uneasiness and jealousy excited by this discovery.

Jacobitism at that time produced a tremor through every nerve of government; and the slightest incident which discovered any intercourse between the Pretender and France, occasioned the most serious apprehensions. It was no wonder, therefore, that this event should spread alarms, which the observations of the two brothers were calculated to obviate. The letters which passed on this occasion, are given

in order of date, and are sufficiently explicit without any further illustration

During the absence of the king at Hanover, where he remained till the beginning of January, the spirit of discontent and insurrection was busy at home; and various tumults took place in the capital, and other parts of the kingdom. In the capital, these disturbances were occasioned by the weavers in Spitalfields, who took umbrage that the Irish were employed at an inferior rate of wages; and by the discontent of the populace, excited by the execution of the gin act.

These alarming riots, which were notoriously fomented by the disaffected, were scarcely suppressed, when a more atrocious outrage demanded the attention of government. One Wilson, a daring smuggler, was sentenced to be hanged at Edinburgh, for having robbed a collector of the revenue. As this man had abetted the escape of a fellow criminal, in the time of divine service, and from the midst of his guards, the magistrates of Edinburgh increased their usual precautions for the execution of the sentence, by ordering the officers of the train bands and the city guard, provided with arms and ammunition, to attend for the purpose of preventing his rescue. The procession passed along; the sentence was fulfilled without the smallest appearance of riot, and the executioner was at the top of the ladder cutting down the body, when the magistrates retired. At this moment, the populace rushed

* Correspondence, Period VI. Article, the Pretender's Letter.

forward towards the gallows, and part forced their way through the guards, with intention, as was supposed, to carry off the body, under the hopes of recovering it. Others threw large stones, maimed several soldiers, and struck captain Porteous, who was so provoked at this outrage, that he ordered the soldiers to fire. Five were killed, and several wounded. Porteous was immediately apprehended, and tried, for having directed the soldiers to fire without the orders of the civil magistrate, and was condemned to death. But so many favourable circumstances appeared on his trial, that seven of the fifteen jurymen acquitted him, and the verdict which condemned him, acknowledged that "he and his "guards were attacked and beat with several "stones of a considerable bigness, thrown by the "multitude, whereby several of the soldiers were "bruised and wounded."* In consequence of this ridiculous inconsistency in the verdict, and other favourable circumstances, the queen regent sent down a respite of six weeks, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the case.

On the 3d, the reprieve was brought to Edinburgh, and on the 4th, vague reports were circulated, that the populace had resolved on the evening of the 8th, to set fire to the prison, if Porteous was not executed that day, according to his sentence. But the magistrates, on inquiry, could not discover any foundation for the report,

* Trial and Sentence. Political State, 1736; and Gentleman's Magazine.

and no precaution was taken to remove the prisoner into the castle. On Tuesday the 7th, about a quarter before ten at night, the magistrates had notice, that a few boys had seized the drum in the suburb of West Port, and beat it in the Grass Market, within the city. About six minutes before ten, they sent to call out the guard immediately; but a few minutes before the clock struck, a mob suddenly rushed in, and surprised the guards, drove them from the guard room, seized all their firelocks, besides several Lochaber axes, and almost at the same time made themselves masters of the city gates. They then provided themselves with shot by breaking open the shops where ammunition was sold, attacked the gaol, drove out the provosts and magistrates, who attempted to disperse them, and wounded several of their attendants. They next set fire to the gate of the prison, and rushed into the wards, forced the turnkeys to open the doors, released all the prisoners, seized Porteous, and dragged him to the Grass Market, where they broke into a shop, took out a coil of ropes, and hung him upon a dyer's cross post, close to the common place of execution.* Lindsay, member for the city, found means to escape from the town, and conveyed information of the tumult, to general Moyle, commander of the king's troops, who were quartered in the suburbs; but he was obliged to make a large circuit, he did not reach the head quarters till near eleven. General Moyle

* Narrative of the Tumult. Correspondence.

had already collected his own troops, and sent for those who were quartered at Leith, but made no attempt to force the gate of the city, which was occupied by the armed populace. He persisted in refusing to act against the insurgents, on the faith of Lindsay's intelligence, without an order from the civil magistrate; and dispatched a messenger to Andrew Fletcher, lord justice clerk of Scotland, who was at his villa distant above two miles and a half. Fletcher being in bed, no answer was procured until one o'clock, and by some mistake, it was then delivered not to the general, but to Lindsay. Meanwhile the execution of Porteous had taken place, the exertions of the military were rendered unnecessary, by the dispersion of the rioters, and in the morning, Edinburgh was in a state of perfect tranquillity.

Lord Ilay was sent to Edinburgh, as the only person capable of bringing the offenders to justice. The accounts * which he transmitted to Sir Robert Walpole, proved that a regular systematic plan had been formed with the utmost secrecy and order; that several made this infamous murder a point of conscience; and that one of the actors went to a country church, where the sacrament was given to a large number of people, in the church-yard, and boasted of the share which he had taken in the transaction. He observed, that persons who

* Correspondence.

affected sanctity, spoke of the murder as the hand of God, doing justice, and reprobated all endeavours to bring the actors to condign punishment, as grievous persecution. He added also, that although several persons had been imprisoned, and large rewards offered, no discovery had been made of the perpetrators or instigators of this atrocious act.

CHAPTER 47.

1737.

Meeting of Parliament—Speech from the Throne—Proceedings:—On the Bill respecting the Tumults at Edinburgh—On Sir John Barnard's Scheme for the Reduction of Interest—Indirectly opposed by Walpole—Thrown out—Licentiousness of the Stage—Origin and Progress of the Playhouse Bill.

THIS session of parliament, which opened on the 1st of February, was as unquiet and stormy, as the last had been easy and tranquil.

The parliamentary proceedings, which it is necessary to notice are, the debates respecting the tumults in Edinburgh; Sir John Barnard's proposal for the reduction of interest; the playhouse bill, and the motion for an address to the king, to settle £. 100,000 per annum on the prince of Wales.

The speech from the throne noticed the late disturbances, but without any specific mention of the tumult at Edinburgh. It was answered by loyal addresses from both houses, testifying their abhorrence of such outrages, and their resolution to support the royal authority in suppressing all riotous and seditious attempts, which threatened the very being of the constitution. The minister, however, seems to have been

embarrassed in what manner to introduce the inquiry. Fortunately, lord Carteret relieved him from this dilemma. Although he was in violent opposition to the measures of administration, yet he justly thought that the indignity committed against the established government, should not remain unpunished. He accordingly referred to that part of the speech which alluded to the tumults in various parts of the kingdom. After arguing that these riots did not proceed from disaffection to government, and complaining, that notwithstanding the power with which the civil magistrate was armed, the military force had been employed in suppressing them, he adverted to the murder of captain Porteous, which he particularly stigmatised as a most atrocious deed; observing that the conspiracy which had effected it was the more dreadful, because it was concerted and executed with great deliberation and method, and was attended with no other disorder. He was of opinion, that some citizens of Edinburgh had been concerned in the murder; that the magistrates had encouraged the riot, and that the city had forfeited its charter; he concluded with expressing hopes that an inquiry would be made into the particulars and circumstances of the case.

The duke of Newcastle and the lord chancellor, after contending for the necessity of employing the military force, in suppressing riots and putting the laws in execution, and justifying the reprieve of captain Porteous, did not resist or

promote the investigation proposed by lord Carteret; they only argued for a general inquiry into the causes and circumstances of the riot, and not for a specific inquiry into the disturbances. Carteret, in reply, maintained the necessity of a particular inquiry, and of confining it to the tumult at Edinburgh. The earl of Ilay, after opposing the forfeiture of the charter, and observing that the outrages had originated from disaffection to government, declared himself in favour of a particular inquiry, and expressed his readiness to join in any proposition for that purpose. A motion was accordingly made by Carteret, for the attendance of the magistrates, and other persons, who could give the necessary information, and for an address to the king, that copies of the trial of captain Porteous, and the account of the murder, should be laid before the house.

In consequence of this motion, which passed without opposition, the respective documents were produced. In examining the proceedings of the trial, it plainly appeared that Porteous was fully justified, on the principles of self-defence, in firing upon the mob, and that the reprieve granted by the queen was founded on law and justice. And as the constitution of the criminal law in Scotland was different from that in England, it appeared incomprehensible to most of the peers, that a person could be condemned to death, upon a verdict so inconsistent with common justice. Accordingly, it was suggested.

by Carteret, to declare the verdict erroneous; but this proposal was opposed by the earl of Ilay and the lord chancellor, and no motion was made.*

Having thus justified the proceedings of government, the next object was, to discover those who were concerned in the murder, and to punish all who either concerted, or connived at it. The magistrates of Edinburgh, the commander in chief of the forces, Lindsay, member for the city, as well as the Scots judges, were separately examined at the bar. Their allegations, however, were confused and unsatisfactory; but proofs appeared that the magistrates had not been sufficiently active in preventing the rising of the mob, or in suppressing it when excited. Yet no legal evidence was obtained to convict them, nor did it appear that any of the citizens had been accessary to the murder, and not a single person was discovered who had been concerned in it. Notwithstanding this deficiency, the majority of the peers thought it necessary to bring in a bill of pains and penalties against the provost and city, for conniving at, or not preventing the perpetration of so atrocious a deed.

The bill was opposed in a very animated speech by the duke of Argyle, who contended that it was an ex post facto law, punishing a whole community for crimes within the reach of the inferior courts of justice. It was neverthe-

* Lords' Debates.

less carried on the 11th of May by a majority of 54 against 22, and sent down to the commons, under the title of "An Act to disable Alexander Wilson, esquire, from taking, holding, or enjoying, any office or place of magistracy, in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere, in Great Britain, for imprisoning the said Alexander Wilson, and for abolishing the guard of the said city, commonly called the town guard; and for taking away the gates of the Nether Bow Port, and keeping open the same."

Such was the title, and such were the penalties of this famous bill, as it was sent to the commons. It is certain, the ministerial party in the house of peers, had not thoroughly considered the nature of the Scottish constitution, as left by the act of union; nor was the evidence sufficient for justifying the severities contained in the bill. Wilson, the lord provost, was a weak well-meaning man, and had acted to the best of his courage and capacity; and the greatest imputation fixed on him by evidence was, a want of activity in arming the citizens the day before the riot had happened, when only vague rumours were whispered. With respect to the penalties inflicted upon the city of Edinburgh, doubts were raised whether they could regularly be imposed, even by a British parliament, consistently with the articles of union.*

Accordingly, the opposition was violent and strenuous; most of the persons who had ap-

* Tindal.

peared at the bar of the house of lords, were again examined before the commons; petitions were received, and counsel heard against the bill. The Scottish members who were affected by the stigma to be affixed on their capital, and who considered the question as national, uniformly opposed it, and many of them, particularly Duncan Forbes, the lord advocate of Scotland, displayed great abilities. On every reading it produced fresh debates, and in one instance, was carried only by the casting voice of colonel Bladen, the chairman of the committee.

Walpole spoke only on the first reading, and then he said but a few words in reply to those who objected to the bill, because it originated in the house of lords. He observed, that he was as jealous of their right as any other gentleman could be, but thought too scrupulous a jealousy at this time might be attended with the worst consequences. In reply to an observation of Duncan Forbes, that tenderness ought to be shown to the corporations and boroughs which the commons represented, especially those of Scotland, he urged that the commitment of the bill was the greatest mark of tenderness which could be shown. It was to punish, in an exemplary manner, a practice that had been too much encouraged; a practice, which if not suppressed, must destroy the right of all corporations, and perhaps abolish the privileges of the house, and the very form of the constitution. He con-

cluded, by saying, that gentlemen should not oppose the bill without better reasons than any that had yet appeared. He did not enter into the merits, or discuss the proofs of the objections urged by the Scottish lawyers, but left those points to be argued by the attorney and solicitor general. He by no means made it a ministerial question. In the house of lords, some of his friends had promoted and others resisted it, and on one question, the duke of Newcastle and lord chancellor Hardwicke had voted on different sides. The same circumstance occurred in the house of commons. Some of the most violent opposers of government befriended the bill, and others absented themselves while it was depending. He was most anxious that the queen should be justified for granting the reprieve, and that some punishment should be inflicted on the magistrates, as an example to deter others, and to render the civil power responsible for outrages committed in their jurisdiction: a salutary and essential act of policy.

When these points were gained, he was not inclined to enforce the penalties. He suffered therefore the bill to be modified and mitigated. That part which ordered the abolition of the city guard, and the demolition of the gates, was omitted, and in the whole was reduced to an act "for disabling Alexander Wilson, the provost, from taking, holding, or enjoying, any office, or place of magistracy, in the city of Edinburgh, or elsewhere, in Great Britain, and for im-

posing a fine upon the said corporation, of £. 2,000, for the benefit of the widow of Porteous."* The bill, however, thus mitigated and rendered "stingless,"† met with unceasing opposition, and after having narrowly escaped rejection, was sent back to the lords, who agreed to the amendments, and it finally received the royal assent.

While this act was in agitation, another passed the lords, and was sent down to the commons, June 3, "For the more effectual bringing to justice, any persons concerned in the barbarous murder of captain John Porteous, and punishing such as shall knowingly conceal any of the said offenders." This bill was of a severe nature, and was directed to be read, for a stated time, by the established clergy of Scotland, in their pulpits, every Sunday. Amongst other clauses, it contained an indemnity to any person, who was concerned in the murder, provided he discovered and convicted an accomplice, before the first of February. This clause was added to the bill by the commons, as was also another, promising "a reward of £. 200 to any one who should discover, and convict, by their evidence, any person concerned in the murder." These provisions were by many thought too severe, and censured as giving too great encouragement to informers. The Scots, when the act was read to them, treated it with the utmost contempt; and though many thousands were publicly concerned in the murder,

* Tindal. † Ibid.

and some of them tried, yet none were legally convicted.*

These proceedings augmented the unpopularity of the minister, by inflaming the resentment of the Scots, and facilitated the efforts of the duke of Argyle, to return, at the next elections, a majority of the Scottish members in favour of opposition.

Sir Robert Walpole incurred great censure by the alienation of the sinking fund; and has been exposed to no less obloquy, in consequence of his opposition to Sir John Barnard's scheme, for reducing the interest of the national debt. He has been accused by party prejudice, or misapprehension, of the meanest motives for adopting this line of conduct: motives so contradictory, that they refute each other. By some,† he was suspected of having clandestinely promoted the introduction of the bill. It was insinuated that, at first, he intended it should pass; and that he only deferred the measure until the queen, who was supposed to have a million in the funds, could sell out to advantage. Others,‡ on the contrary, ascribe his opposition to the mean spirit of jealousy, and reproach him with having exerted the whole power of government, that he might deprive Sir John Barnard of his due applause.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 344.—The reader is referred for the above particulars, to the Correspondence—Lords' Debates—Chandler—Journals—Tindal—Political State of Great Britain.

† Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 45.

‡ Sinclair on the Revenue, chap. 5.

In the committee of supply on the 9th of March, the minister moved a resolution, that a sum of one million should be taken from the sinking fund, and applied to redeem a million of old South Sea annuities. The motion was opposed by several members, principally of the minority, who argued for the expediency of appropriating that sum to the discharge of the debt due to the bank, because the interest paid to the bank was six per cent., whereas that on the other parts of the public debt did not exceed four. They accordingly proposed the amendment; but the original motion was carried without a division.

On the 14th of March the resolution was reported and agreed to.* On this occasion, Sir John Barnard proposed, that the house should resolve itself into a committee, to take into consideration the national debt, and to receive any proposal which might be made, to reduce the interest to three per cent. The minister, after a few observations on the danger of meddling with public credit, or taking any step which might be likely to affect it, without the most mature reflection, declared that he had no objection to a committee, because time would be allowed for deliberation; and concluded, that if any reasonable scheme for reducing the interest should be then proposed, he should readily agree to it.

On the 18th, the account of the national debt, which amounted to £,47,866,596, was pro-

* Journals.

duced. On the 21st, the house resolved into a committee of supply, and Sir John Barnard brought forward his scheme. With a view to popularity, it was called, a proposal towards lowering the interest of all the redeemable debts to three per cent. and thereby to enable the parliament *to give immediate ease to his majesty's subjects,* by taking off some of the taxes which are most burthensome to the poor, especially to the manufacturers, as likewise *to give ease to the people,* by lessening the annual taxes for the current service of the year.*

* The proposal was as follows:

"That an offer be made to the proprietors of the South Sea Annuities, as well old as new, at such times as the respective transfer books shall be shut, in the following manner; viz. That all persons be at liberty to make their option for the whole, or any part of their capital, of one or more of the particulars undermentioned, for which books be laid open at the South Sea house, for so long time as shall be thought proper; viz. All who desire to be paid their money, to enter their names and sums in one book. Those who shall choose to have annuities for certain terms of years, and the capital to be annihilated, may subscribe in particular books for that purpose, at the following rates:

"For 47	Years at	4	per Cent. per Ann.
31	Years at	5	- - -
23¼	Years at	6	- - -
19	Years at	7	- - -
16	Years at	8	- - -
13¾	Years at	9	- - -
12	Years at	10	- - -

"That the proprietors of so much of the capital, as shall not be claimed in money, nor subscribed into some of the annuities for terms of years, shall, for the future, be entitled to an annuity of 3 per cent. per annum only. And for the encouragement of the annuitants to accept of 3 per cent. per annum, it is proposed, that they be not subject to redemption or diminution of their annuities for the term of 14 years. And that all the annuities for terms of years

Though the principle of the measure was such as to entitle its founder to expect much popularity; yet as the interests and prejudices of many persons were to be combated, great opposition was excited, and the stores of argument and calculation exhausted in defending the plan.

Sir John Barnard moved, in a committee of supply, March 21, "that his majesty be enabled to raise money, either by sale of annuities, for years or lives, at such rates as should be pre-

be transferable at the South Sea house, without any charge; as well as the annuities which shall be continued at 3 per cent. per annum. And that all the annuities for terms of years, commence from the determination of the annuities of 4 per cent. without any loss of time. It is apprehended, that this offer will be more beneficial to the proprietors than the remaining in their present situation, and receiving a million at a time, to be divided alternately between the old and the new annuitants, which must affect them in a very high manner, as it tends greatly to reduce their capital, by continual laying out the money paid off in new annuities at advanced prices.

"If the parliament should be willing to indulge any persons, not being foreigners, who may be advanced in years, with annuities for term of life; the following rates are submitted to the consideration of gentlemen who have turned their thoughts to this subject; viz.

To persons	44	years old, or upwards,		7 per Cent. for Life.
	53	-	-	8
	59	-	-	9
	63	-	-	10

"If these rates for lives, or any other rates, should be thought convenient to be offered; it is then proposed, that the old and new annuitants be permitted to subscribe any part of their capital, they being within the limitation of years above expressed; and that none of the proposals foregoing be made for ready money; because it is reasonable that the present creditors should have the preference in any advantageous offer made by the parliament, as this is apprehended to be, since money may be raised at 3 per cent. per annum, with a liberty of redeeming the same at pleasure."

§

scribed, or by borrowing at an interest not exceeding three per cent. to be applied towards redeeming old and new South Sea annuities, and that such of the annuitants as should be inclined to subscribe their respective annuities, should be preferred to all others."

This motion occasioned long debates. It was principally defended by the landed, and resisted by the monied interest, and the minister's friends were divided. The house did not appear inclined to adopt any specific determination; some of those who were averse to the measure, declared themselves incapable of giving their opinion, without due reflection and more information. They moved, therefore, that the farther consideration should be deferred till that day s'ennight, which was agreed to without opposition. This point being carried, the adversaries of the bill made another effort, which was attended with success. It had been urged as an objection, that a considerable part of the South Sea annuities belonged to widows and orphans, and to persons who were proprietors of small sums. This suggestion had a great effect upon the house. Willing therefore to take advantage of this impression, they moved on the following day, that an account should be laid before the house, of the quantity of old and new South Sea annuity stock, holden by any executors, administrators, or trustees, which account was presented on the ensuing Friday.

Hitherto the minister took no public part, either for or against the scheme; although he

was generally supposed * to be inclined in its favour. But from this period he was determined to oppose it, though he thought it prudent to act with circumspection, as many members who were personally attached to him, favoured the measure. In this situation he had watched the progress of public opinion, and found it decidedly adverse to the proposal, which excited the most violent clamours among the proprietors of the funds.

During the adjournment of the business, the ministerial papers were filled with objections to the measure, and a perspicuous statement,†

* Robert Trevor to Horace Walpole, April 19, 1737. Correspondence. Opinions of the duchess of Marlborough.

† "As I can by no means approve of the scheme published in your paper of Saturday last, for reducing the interest of the national debt to 3 per cent; I shall, for the sake of those who are not acquainted with calculations of this kind, make a few observations on the proposed method of reduction, that such proprietors of the public funds may see how far their interests are like to be affected by it. And, in the first place, I observe, that the annuities proposed for certain terms of years are calculated at compound interest, allowing the annuitants 3 per cent. for their money, and the surplus of the annuity is to reimburse them their purchase money at the same rate of interest.

"To explain this, I shall fix upon the first annuity proposed, which is 4 per cent. for 47 years, at the end of which the capital is to be annihilated. By this proposal, the purchaser is to receive 3 per cent. interest, and the remaining 1 per cent. is to reimburse the purchase money in the term proposed at compound interest; but I cannot think this a fair method of computation in the present case; for, although it be true, that £.1 per annum will, in 47 years, amount to £.100 at compound interest; yet it is highly improbable, if not impossible, that interest upon interest, or indeed any interest at all, should be made of such small sums for 47 years running, as must be done, to raise the sum advanced; and therefore such a method of calculation must be fallacious, and nothing but the surplus of the annuity can be safely relied on for reimbursement of

exposing its inexpediency, appeared in the Whitehall Evening Post, which was either drawn by the minister himself, or approved by

the purchase money; and then it will be evident to the meanest capacity, that if the annuitants are allowed 3 per cent. for their purchase money, they will, at the end of 47 years, have received no more than 47 per cent. of their principal; and in all the other cases the purchasers of the proposed annuities will be considerable losers; only it is to be observed, that the shorter the term is, the less the loss will be: for if the annuity be 7 per cent. for 19 years, the purchasers will receive back 76 per cent., and if 10 per cent. be allowed for 12 years, they will receive back 84 per cent. of their principal money: the reason of which is very obvious to those who know, that compound interest is a series of geometrick progression.

"Secondly, I observe, that if, out of any of the proposed annuities, there is annually reserved a sum sufficient to reimburse the purchase money, the annuitants will not receive an interest of 2 per cent. upon their principal. And for the proof of this, I shall only take notice of the two extremes and middle term in the annuities proposed; by which it will appear, that if £. 2 out of £. 4 be reserved for 47 years, it will raise no more than £. 94, and if £. 5 out of £. 7. be reserved for 19 years, it will amount to no more than £. 95, and £. 8 out of £. 10 for 12 years, will give only 96.

"Thirdly, It is to be observed, that the method proposed will not enable the parliament to give immediate ease to his majesty's subjects, by taking off some of the taxes which are most burthensome to the poor, and especially to the manufacturers: for, by the first proposal, the same annual interest which is now paid, viz. 4 per cent. is to be continued for 47 years; and consequently the taxes by which that interest is raised must be continued for that term, which will give but small relief to the present generation. And in all the other cases, the annual interest must be augmented, instead of being reduced: for if the proprietors of £. 20,000,000 of the public debts could be supposed to accept any of these annuities upon the terms proposed, the annual interest must then be increased in the following manner; viz.

For 31	Years	200,000 per Ann.
23¼	Years	400,000
19	Years	600,000
16	Years	800,000
13¼	Years	1,000,000
12	Years	1,200,000

him. In the same paper of the 26th, an appeal was made to the feelings and passions of the public, in which the bill was described, as tending to ruin trade, to depopulate the capital, to impoverish widows and orphans, to reduce the farmers to day labourers, and the sons of noblemen and gentlemen to farmers.

These exaggerated declamations made a deep impression on the public mind. When the house met on the 28th to resume the considera-

"Fourthly, I observe, that the other part of the scheme, which relates to annuities upon lives, is liable to the same objection: for if the proposed annuities are taken at a medium of 8¼ per cent., and the lives are supposed at a medium to continue 18 years (which very nearly coincides with the rules laid down for finding the number of years due to any given life) then it will be evident that a further interest of 4¼ per cent. must be raised to pay such annuities, which will more than double the present annual interest.

"Fifthly, It is to be observed, that this scheme is not calculated for the good of the whole, but, according to the old proverb, to rob Peter to pay Paul, or, to remove the burthen from one part of the community, and lay it upon another, and upon that part too which hath already contributed no less than six shillings and eight-pence in the pound towards lessening the public debts. I am unwilling to charge the author with an intention to oppress the proprietors of the public funds, though his scheme manifestly tends to it! But why does his tenderness lie all on one side? Is there no part of it due to those widows and orphans, who have no other way of subsistence, but the income of small fortunes on government securities? For my part, I cannot perceive the honesty or policy of easing one part of the community, by distressing another; neither can I apprehend any wisdom or justice in making invidious distinctions between the landed and monied interest; since it is in a great measure owing to those, who ventured their fortunes in the public funds, that the Protestant part of this nation have any lands or liberties left. I do therefore hope that their present interest will not be lessened; but if nothing else will serve, I am persuaded I can propose a way of doing it that will be the least injurious to them of any that can be thought of, which, if called upon, I am ready to publish."

tion of the bill, Sir John Barnard entered into a full explanation of his scheme, and laboured with great address and ability to obviate these popular objections. He went over all the grounds of political expediency, and in the course of a very long and ingenious explanation, urged, that in every view of the subject, relating to the extension of commerce, both domestic and foreign, to the encouragement of industry, the increase of population, the augmentation of the manufactures, and the improvement of agriculture, this plan would be attended with the most extensive and beneficial consequences. He said, that even those public securities, which bore an interest of three per cent. only, were sold at a premium in Change-alley. He was, therefore, persuaded, that all those who were willing to give a premium for a three per cent. security, would gladly lend their money to government for the same interest, should books of subscription be opened for that purpose, with an assurance, that no part of the principal should be paid off for fourteen years. He expatiated on the national advantages that would accrue from a reduction of interest. From a long series of calculations, he inferred, that in a very little time the interest upon all the South Sea annuities would be reduced from four to three per cent. without any danger to public credit, or breach of public faith; that then the produce of the sinking fund would amount to fourteen hundred thousand pounds per annum, to be applied only towards redeeming the capital of the

several trading companies. He proved that this measure would bring every one of them so much within the power of parliament, that they would be glad to accept of three per cent. interest on any reasonable terms; in which case the sinking fund would rise to one million six hundred thousand pounds per annum. Then the parliament might venture to annihilate one half of it, by freeing the people from the taxes upon coals, candles, soap, leather, and other such impositions as lay heavy upon the poor labourers and manufacturers. The remaining part of the sinking fund might be applied towards the discharge of those annuities and public debts, which bore an interest of three per cent. only, and afterwards, towards diminishing the capitals of the several trading companies, till the term of fourteen years should be expired; then the sinking fund would again amount to above a million yearly, which would be sufficient for paying them off, and freeing the nation entirely from all its incumbrances.*

Walpole, among others, replied to this statement, but his arguments were confined to show that the time was improper for the reduction of interest.† He was fully convinced that the proposal, in the shape it was offered by Sir John Barnard, was neither expedient nor practicable. It became necessary therefore either to amend or throw it out. To throw it out by direct opposition, was not in his power, as notwithstanding

* Chandler. Smollett's History of England, vol. 2. p. 521.
† Chandler.

its increasing unpopularity without doors, it still seemed agreeable to the general sense of the house, and was warmly supported by many of the members who were personally attached to him. His confidential friend, Mr. Howe, afterwards Lord Chedworth, had proposed the scheme in the highest terms of approbation. He said that the country gentlemen would be benefited by the reduction; that the landed interest required, and were entitled to relief, that the land had hitherto been loaded with all the burthens, while the funds had borne none; and that their necessities had arisen from the abundance of the stocks.* In these circumstances, Walpole, apprehensive that it would be carried with all its imperfections, adopted indirect means of throwing it out. At the close of the debate, his friend Winnington proposed to extend the reduction to all the redeemable debts. He observed, that he would not enter into the question, whether a reduction of interest would tend to the advantage of the nation, or whether the natural interest of money lent on public security was below three per cent. But should both be resolved in the affirmative, according to the principles of the bill, he must condemn the injustice and partiality of confining the reduction to the South Sea annuities. He was of opinion, that it ought to be extended in its operation to all the public creditors. These, he concluded, were his sentiments, and if they were approved by the house,

* Heads of Mr. Howe's Speech. Parliamentary Memorandums. Orford Papers.

he should move for resolutions to redeem all public debts that were redeemable by law, and to enable the king to borrow money at three per cent. for that purpose.

These observations seemed to meet the general sentiments of the house, and Sir John Barnard could not venture to oppose them. He observed, however, that the proposal was intended to frustrate his scheme, by introducing such amendments, as must render it abortive, according to the old proverb, "Grasp at all, and lose all." He added, that although government could borrow money at three per cent. sufficient to pay off so many proprietors of the South Sea annuities as were willing to accept that interest, because their united stock did not exceed twenty-four millions, yet it would be extremely difficult to obtain such a loan as would discharge the whole of the redeemable fund, which amounted to forty-four millions. But as the scheme, even thus amended, might be productive of signal advantage to the nation, he should not oppose it, and he hoped the honourable gentleman would move for such a resolution as he had just intimated. Two resolutions were accordingly moved by Winnington. They contained in substance, "That all the public funds, redeemable by law, which carry an interest of four per cent. per annum, be redeemed according to the respective provisos or clauses of redemption, contained in the acts of parliament for that purpose, or (with consent of the proprietors) be converted into an interest or annuity, not

exceeding three per cent. per annum, not redeemable till after fourteen years. That his majesty be enabled to borrow from any person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, any sum or sums of money, at an interest not exceeding three per cent. to be applied towards redeeming the national debt."*

These resolutions being reported, March 30, and carried by a majority of 220 to 157, in which division Walpole appeared in the minority, Sir John Barnard, Wortley Montague, and the master of the rolls, were ordered to prepare a bill accordingly.†

Sir John Barnard, however, had not sufficient discretion to be satisfied with this partial victory. Instead of weakening the resistance to his favourite scheme, by making it as much as possible a great national object, he on the contrary united a numerous body of adversaries, lost the vantage ground on which he before stood, and reduced it to a mere party question. He followed up the report by moving, "that the house would, as soon as the interest of all the national redeemable debt should be reduced to £.3 per cent. per annum, abolish some of the heavy taxes which oppressed the poor, and the manufacturer."‡

His view in making this unprecedented motion, was to attach popularity to his bill; but it had a contrary effect, for it was proved to be fallacious, illusory, and irregular. It was falla-

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 452. † Tindal. Chandler. Journals.
‡ Journals.

cious, because it assumed as facts, statements that were not true; that the public imposts fell more heavily upon the poor in England, than in other countries, and implied, that the reduction of the interest from four to three per cent. would compensate for the loss of the revenue, if those taxes were abolished. It was illusory, because it held out a prospect of taking off the taxes several years before the reduction could be effected; and it was irregular, because it bound future parliaments to the adoption of a measure, which might not at a future time be feasible. It was ably and unanswerably argued by the minister, and those who opposed it, that to agree to the resolution, would be exposing the public to unavoidable disappointment, "that it would be time enough to come to a resolution to abolish some taxes, when the scheme had taken effect; for if such a previous resolution should be adopted, and the scheme should afterwards prove altogether abortive, the whole world would laugh at their precipitancy."

In the speech which Sir John Barnard made in defence of this motion, he betrayed such a confusion of projects, and indistinctness of ideas, assumed so many principles which were untrue, and so violently transgressed the bounds of parliamentary engagement, that the motion was negatived, by 200 against 142, and the public clamour very much heightened.

In these unfavourable circumstances, the bill, prepared on the basis of Winnington's resolutions, was presented to the house by Sir John

Barnard, and it was read the first time on the 22d of April. On the 29th, it was read a second time, and a motion being made for recommitting it, it was no less resolutely supported than vigorously attacked. Several speakers on both sides had been heard before Walpole delivered his sentiments.

He began by denying the truth of an assertion, which had been assidiously disseminated, that Sir John Barnard had held private conferences with him, and settled the scheme then in agitation. He proceeded to review his own conduct during its progress; acknowledged that he had acquiesced in the committee, but that on the first reading, feeling some doubts on the propriety of the measure; he had desired time to weigh maturely its beneficial against its evil consequences. "But whatever doubts," he continued, "I might then entertain, deliberate reflection has removed them, and convinced me of its inefficiency.

"The measure is founded on plausible assumptions, that it is better to pay three than four per cent., and that it is desirable to discharge the debt of the nation. These positions are undoubtedly true, but the question is, whether the method proposed to effect them is just and adequate? We must take care not to confound public necessity with public utility. Public utility differs essentially from profit or benefit gained to the public; for when profit accrues to the public, at the expense of many individuals, it loses all claim to consideration under the title of

public utillity. This house, in carefully attending to their duty as guardians of the national purse, must not forget that they are trustees for the creditors. We must not assume a right to prejudice the public creditors, or to convert the right of redemption which we possess, into a right of reduction, to which we have no claim. Debts not originally subject to reduction, are, in that respect, in the situation of irredeemables, and the faith of parliament is equally pledged to prevent any reduction without the consent of the proprietors. If we advert to the time and manner in which these debts were created, every argument against the reduction of interest, acquires a great additional force. At that disastrous period, the creditors of the South Sea and East India companies had a power to demand the whole amount of their bonds. Their forbearance was essentially necessary to the defence and well-being of the community; for, had they persisted in claiming their principle, the whole must have fallen on the landed interest, or the result must have been such as I dare not mention, or hardly think of. And is the service then rendered to the country, to be now repaid by a compulsory reduction of their dividends? I call it compulsory, for any reduction by terror, can only be described by that name. If they are to be so reduced, the pretence is, that it will ease the current service, diminish the taxes; but that would be only to take the taxes off others, to be imposed on them, in the most cruel and insupportable manner. It would be equally

just to take one fourth from the income of every individual, or to deprive him of one fourth of his lands or stock in trade; or rather the injustice would be less in such case, because the national creditor is, by express contract, exempt from all public taxes and impositions.

"Nor is it true that the interest proposed is equivalent to the value of money; for though money cannot be invested in the funds without an advance above three per cent. at par, yet all loans on real securities, on estates, or on personal securities, bear a much higher interest. The preference given to the funds, arises from various causes; from the facility of receiving interest, cheapness of transfer; and from none more than the faith placed in the national honour, which is bound to suffer no loss to fall on the public creditor. Stock, while the credit remains untarnished, is but another name for ready money, bearing interest, a property which in no other case can attach to ready money; and if the confidence now placed in the guardians of the public honour is diminished, even that advantage will not in future tempt individuals to trust their money out of their own custody. No diminution of taxes, or other contingent advantage, can compensate for such a privation; nor is it to be compared to a repayment of the principal at any time, however inconvenient; for it is not to be supposed that any one would prefer a sudden and absolute privation of one fourth of his whole income, to the casual and distant resumption of 10 or 15 per cent. on his capital,

not to be effected without an equivalent payment, which may be delayed by accident, or frustrated by necessity.

"The injustice of the present plan appears in this, that it is calculated to mark out all the great companies, and to benefit the borrowers at the expense of the lenders. But this is not the whole extent of the evil. A double duty is incumbent on the legislature; to use their utmost exertions towards paying the national debt, and to avoid creating distresses and discontent. Now the whole number of persons interested in the stock to be affected by the proposed measure, is about 23,000, of these, upwards of 6,000 are interested as executors, administrators, and trustees, and upwards of 17,000 are possessed only of sums not exceeding £.1,000. The executors and trustees must be greatly embarrassed, especially if the sums committed to them are small, in perfecting the purposes for which they are confided; and those who possess such small sums as do not amount to £.1,000 must be much distressed by so unexpected and wanton a reduction of their income."

The minister, in the course of these observations, took an ample review of the bill, which he showed to be unequal to the ends it was designed to answer. He proved that the alternatives of the proposition, produced repugnant and discordant effects; and that the plan was destructive of the purposes, and inadequate in benefit to the sinking fund.

On this head, he begged leave to take notice

of a circumstance that personally alluded to him. Gentlemen had discussed, in the course of the debate, *the advantages which had been derived from the* plan of reducing the national debt from six to five per cent. which he had the honour of proposing to the house. They had conceived it impossible for him to resist a similar reduction from four to three per cent. without the grossest inconsistency. But he was free to declare, that he could oppose the present scheme without subjecting himself to that imputation. It became his duty, on the authority of the former scheme, to give his negative to this, because no two schemes ever differed more widely in their intention, effect, and consequences.

He then stated the difference between the present scheme, and that which he had proposed. "This scheme," he observed, "is compulsory, mine was optional. On the former occasion, money was prepared; on this, it was yet to be raised. My scheme laid the foundation, this reverses the whole system of the sinking fund. Mine was founded upon converting numbers of years at higher rates, into perpetuities at lower rates. This plan establishes terms of years at higher rates, in lieu of perpetuities at lower rates, after an expiration of twenty years of the former terms. This was intended to lock up the sinking fund for several years, of which the shortest term was not less than twelve, and the longest forty-seven. During this time, all reduction of interest would be prevented, all abolition of taxes rendered impracticable, and a necessity imposed

of laying fresh burthens in case of emergency. Whereas mine had a contrary tendency. A million of the debt might be annually discharged, or some of the existing taxes might be abolished, or the imposition of fresh taxes prevented, by applying the surplusses of the sinking fund to the current service.

"The declared intention of the bill is, to give ease to the subject; and the title specifies *immediate* ease. But its tendency is calculated to violate this very principle, and to falsify the title, for no ease can be given, until the reduction has taken place, and that event is distant, uncertain, and precarious. In fact, the present disadvantages of the scheme proposed by the honourable gentleman, evidently appear from the affectation with which he expatiated on *his love to posterity*. For certain it is, that his scheme cannot benefit the present generation, but its salutary effects will principally be confined to those who are yet unborn."*

Sir John Barnard said in reply, "I am very much obliged to the honourable gentleman, Sir, and therefore, I thank him for vindicating me from the imputation of having had any private conversation with him, or of having ever had any concert with him; and if he is afraid lest people should suspect his having had a hand in the scheme I proposed to you, I shall be equally just to him, by declaring, I never had any private

* The substance of this speech is taken from parliamentary minutes in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole. Walpole Papers.

conversation with him about it, nor did I so much as ask his approbation or consent to what I was to offer. But as to the scheme as it now stands, every gentleman that hears me, knows it is very different from what I offered; and every one likewise knows, that the new model, which is the model we have now before us, if it was not offered by the honourable gentleman himself, it was at least offered by some of his friends; and what they proposed was agreed to by other gentlemen, in order that we might have their assistance in carrying it through. Therefore the scheme now before you, cannot properly be called mine; and it is very remarkable, that all objections made to the bill, are only to those articles and clauses of it, which relate to the improvements and additions made to my scheme, by the honourable gentleman's friends."* The house divided, and the question of committing the bill was negatived, by 249 against 134.†

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 479.

† I have dwelt thus particularly on the consideration of Sir John Barnard's scheme, because the accounts given by most writers, who have fallen under my observation, are superficial and inaccurate. Even Tindal is unusually short and barren of information. Tindal, vol. 20. p. 348.

Smollett, excepting a good abstract of Sir John Barnard's speech, which I have adopted in the text, is extremely deficient. He says it produced other debates, and was at last *postponed* by dint of ministerial influence. The falsity of this account is evident. Smollett, vol. 2. p. 627.

Belsham observes, "A bill was, however, ordered upon the basis of Winnington's proposition, which being in the sequel warmly attacked, and *faintly defended*, was *finally postponed to a distant day, by a motion of the minister.*" In this short account there are three errors. It was warmly attacked, *but by no means faintly defended.*

It is difficult, without farther documents on this subject than I possess, to ascertain all the motives which induced the minister to resist the reduction. It may be sufficient, perhaps, to attribute it to a full conviction, that the measure was highly and generally unpopular. He had relinquished his favourite Excise scheme, notwithstanding the certainty of its beneficial tendency, solely on that account. It was not to be supposed that he would promote this scheme, of the good tendency of which he was not assured, and which in many respects was partial and unjust.

But in addition to this motive, I can suggest two others, which influenced this dissent. First, he foresaw, from the disputes with Spain, which then began to rise, that the nation might be involved in a war, and that government could borrow money with greater facility at four per cent. than at three. He was still more swayed by another motive, which he could not venture to disclose. He had already appropriated part of the surplus of the sinking fund to the current service of the year, and as the measure was extremely popular, he had resolved, in case of emergency, to alienate the whole. But his design would have been frustrated by this bill, which would have locked up the greater part of the sinking fund for several years, and have rendered it necessary to impose new taxes for

It was not *finally postponed to a distant day*, but the second reading was only put off for seven days; and it was then *negatived*, but *not on the motion of the minister*. Belsham, vol. 1. p. 30.

the purpose of supplying the incidental expenses.*

An act of this session, which is commonly denominated the playhouse bill, has exposed the minister to no less obloquy, from subsequent writers, than his opposition to the reduction of interest.

Those who thus load him with indiscriminate censure, and impute this act solely to his *despotic influence*, have not paid due attention to the history of the English stage, to the power of the lord chamberlain over the players and theatrical representations, and to the opinion of the most moderate and best informed magistrates, at the period of passing this act, which has been so much calumniated, and so little understood.

It is needless to discuss the question concerning the necessity of fixing some bounds to the licentiousness of the stage. The necessity must be allowed, except by those who think it fitting to subject to public mockery, law, government, and religion, and to expose magistrates, judges, and kings, to the personalities of satire, buffoonery, and low mimicry. In all well regulated governments, the principle has been universally admitted, and wherever it has not been adopted, the most fatal consequences have followed. Even the freest democracy which perhaps ever existed, that of Athens, after having experienced

* A reduction of interest took place in 1749, upon a plan, which has been described as similar, though it is essentially different from the original scheme proposed by Sir John Barnard. It was finally carried, though not without great opposition, by the united influence of the minister (Pelham) and Sir John Barnard.

the effects of unrestrained licentiousness in their theatrical performances, found it necessary to remedy the evil, and to limit the stage within the boundaries of common decency and justice.

It appears from the history of the English stage, that no period ever existed when it was not subject to superintendence, when players were not licensed, and when plays were not reviewed and amended, allowed, or rejected. Before the reign of Henry the Eighth, the power of superintending the king's hunting parties, the direction of the comedians, musicians, and other royal servants, appointed either for use or recreation, was exclusively vested in the lord chamberlain.

Under him, and subject to his control, was an inferior officer, who exerted himself on particular occasions, for the purpose of regulating pageants, public festivals, and masquerades. This man was called by the fanciful names of the *Abbot of Misrule*, or *Lord of Pastimes*. But in the reign of Henry the Eighth, this temporary office was rendered regular and permanent, by letters patent, and called the office of *Master of the Revels*.*

Under Elizabeth, some wise regulations, with the advice of Walsingham, and co-operation of Burleigh, were made for allowing the use, but correcting the abuse of the stage; particularly, when the earl of Leicester obtained the first general licence for his theatrical servants to act stage plays in any part of England, a proviso

* Officium magistri jocorum, *revelorum* et mascorum.

was added in the patent, enjoining that *all comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage plays, should be examined and allowed by the master of the revels.* Thus that authority which was before confined to the pastimes of the court, was now extended to the theatrical exhibitions of the whole kingdom.

During her reign also, the privy council exercised an authority, legislative and executive, over the dramatic world. They opened and shut playhouses; gave and recalled licences; appointed the proper seasons when plays ought to be presented or with-held; and regulated the conduct of the lord mayor of London, and the vice-chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge, with regard to plays and players. The privy council gave Tilney, the master of the revels in 1589, two co-adjutors, a statesman and a divine, to assist him in reforming comedies and tragedies.

These prudent regulations, and the wisdom with which they were exercised, were attended with the most beneficial effects. The master of the revels, by regulating the stage, and restraining the number of theatres, gave more respectability to the profession of a player, and the genius of the drama expanded and soared to a greater height, although its limits were contracted and its flight circumscribed.

Had not these wise regulations taken place, Shakespeare might have confined to burlesque farces, and low buffoonery, those vast powers of invention and description which his own language can alone adequately delineate.

"The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,
Glances from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n,
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."*

By the wise and temperate use which the master of the revels made of his power, his weight and influence increased, and he gradually appropriated to himself the greater part of that authority, which had belonged to the lord chamberlain. In the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, it was held by Sir Henry Herbert,† nearly allied to the earl of Pembroke, lord chamberlain. Under his prudent management the reputation and consequence of the office increased, and produced the most salutary effects, until his functions were wholly suspended, by the troubles and confusion of the civil wars, and the fanaticism of the republicans.

On the restoration of Charles the Second, the master of the revels endeavoured to resume his former authority, but met with insuperable opposition from the proprietors and managers of the king's and duke's companies, one of which had obtained a fresh licence to act plays, the other a renewal of a former grant. In vain the master of the revels applied to the courts of justice for redress; in vain he appealed to the sovereign,

* Midsummer Night's Dream.

† Brother to the eccentric lord Herbert, of Cherbury, and of George Herbert, rector of Bemerton, known by the name of the divine Herbert.

or to the lord chamberlain. He was neither supported by the one, nor countenanced by the other; his authority, though not overthrown, was considerably shaken, and his regulations were combated and despised.

During this suspension of his power, the particular differences, pretensions, or complaints, were generally settled by the personal interference of the king and duke, or referred to the decision of the lord chamberlain. In consequence of this relaxation of authority, and the libertine character of the court, the theatre was disgraced by the grossest ribaldry, and the best authors vied who should produce the most licentious comedies. Ladies could not venture to attend a new play without masks, then daily worn, and admitted into the pit, the side boxes, and the gallery.

On the death of Sir Henry Herbert, the mastership of the revels was conferred on Charles Killigrew, manager of the king's company. The union of these two functions increased the evil, and no check was imposed on the glaring immorality of the stage.

At the revolution, the power of the lord chamberlain over the theatre was revived without restriction. He opened and shut playhouses, imprisoned and licensed players, corrected and rejected plays. Under him the master of the revels seems to have recovered some part of his former power, and to have had his share in the revolutions of the theatre. He revised and sanctioned plays, and his aid greatly contributed to

the celebrated conquest which Jeremy Collier, by the publication of his short view of the stage, obtained over the immorality of the drama. In this publication, the most profane and obscene passages, in several modern plays, which had been written by Dryden, Vanbrugh, Wycherly, Congreve, and the most admired dramatic authors, were detected and exposed. The truth of his observations, which all the wit and talents of the authors who were deservedly chastised, could not controvert, produced a surprising effect. A general outcry was raised against the licentiousness of the stage, and king William sent the following order to the playhouses: "His majesty being informed, that notwithstanding an order made in June 1697, by the earl of Sunderland, then lord chamberlain of the king's household, to prevent the profaneness and immorality of the stage, several plays have lately been acted, containing several expressions contrary to religion and good manners: And whereas the master of the revels hath represented, that, in contempt of the said order, the actors did neglect to leave out such profane and indecent expressions, as he had thought proper to be omitted: Therefore, it is his majesty's pleasure, that they shall not hereafter presume to act any thing in any play, contrary to religion and good manners, as they shall answer at their utmost peril." At the same time, the master of the revels was commanded not to license any plays containing irreligious or immoral expressions, and give notice to the lord chamberlain, or in

his absence to the vice-chamberlain, if the players presumed to act any thing which he had erased.*

But this reformation did not continue long in its full force. As soon as the first awe and panic of the actors had subsided, the stage nearly relapsed into its former immorality; all attempts to reform it became the object of theatrical wit, and were ridiculed in plays, prologues, and epilogues. Although the new plays were usually more decent and moral; yet the old plays were frequently acted, without being freed from their exceptionable passages.

Either in consequence of these proceedings, or of some disputes which arose between the actors of the royal theatres, and produced the desertion of the principal performers from Drury Lane to the Haymarket, the nuisance of playhouses, and the conduct of the performers, became so flagrant, that a bill, in the twelfth year of queen Anne, included players, who acted without a legal settlement in the places where they performed, among vagrants, and subjected them to the same penalties as rogues and vagabonds. But before the beneficial effects of this act could have time to operate, the death of the queen produced a new revolution in the drama.

Soon after the accession of George the First, the power of the master of the revels, which had been considerably circumscribed, was almost annihilated. A new patent was injudiciously granted to Sir Richard Steele, Colley Cibber, and

* Tindal, vol. 14. p. 478.

Booth, for acting plays, without subjecting them to the licence or revision of any officer.

In consequence of this grant, the master of the revels was abridged of his power, and defrauded of his dues, and his emoluments were reduced to a small salary from the exchequer, to lodgings in Somerset House, and to occasional fees.

At the death of Charles Killigrew, the office, thus mutilated was, in 1724, conferred on Charles Henry Lee, and the decline of his power was sufficiently shown by the growing licentiousness of the stage, and the numerous pieces which offended equally against religion, decency, and common sense.

Although, in all the letters patent for acting plays since the time of Charles the First, no mention was made of the lord chamberlain; yet he was still considered as possessing an absolute, though an undefinable authority over the stage, which he had occasionally exercised. The performance of several theatrical pieces had been prevented, particularly Lucius Junius Brutus, a prologue of Dryden to the Prophetess, Mary queen of Scotland, and recently Polly, the sequel to the Beggar's Opera.

But as this exercise of his power had been always attended with much unpopularity, it was seldom exerted. Numerous theatres were erected in different parts of the metropolis, in which the actors performed without licence or authority. To prevent this, several attempts were made to enforce the laws then existing. An actor, who performed on the theatre of the Haymarket,

without licence, was taken from the stage, by the warrant of a justice of peace, and committed to Bridewell, as coming under the penalty of the vagrant act. The legality of the commitment was disputed. A trial ensued; and it was decided, that the comedian being a housekeeper, and having a vote for electing members of parliament, did not come within the description of the said act. He was therefore discharged amidst the loud acclamations of the populace. The issue of this trial gave full scope to the licentiousness of the stage, and took away all hopes of reducing the number of playhouses.

From this representation of the state of the drama, it is evident, that some reformation was indispensably necessary. The minister himself had long seen that necessity. The obloquy which pursued him was not confined to the press. The stage was made the vehicle of the most malignant sarcasms, not expressed in the elevated tone of tragedy, or couched in sentiments and language perceptible only to men of refined understandings; but his person was brought on the stage, his actions maligned, his measures misrepresented and arraigned, and his conduct made the sport of the populace, in all the petulance of vulgar farce. He was unwilling, however, to make this a personal consideration; but rather a public and national question, in which the good of the law, constitution, religion, and morality, was intimately involved, and such an opportunity seemed to present itself, when Sir John Barnard, on the 5th of March

1735, brought in a bill "to restrain the number of houses for playing of interludes, and for the better regulating of common players of interludes."

On representing the mischiefs which theatres had done to the city of London, by corrupting youth, encouraging vice and debauchery, and greatly prejudicing trade, the proposal was at first received with contempt and ridicule, until it was seconded by Sandys, Pulteney, and warmly supported by the minister himself. It was observed by a member, in the course of the debate, that there were at that time not less than six theatres in London. The house being fully convinced of the necessity of the bill, leave was given to introduce it without a single dissenting voice. It was accordingly, on the 3rd of April presented, read the first time, and ordered to be printed; notwithstanding petitions against it from the proprietor of the theatre in Goodman's Fields, and from the master and comptroller of the revels. It was read a second time on the 14th of April.

The minister conceived this to be a favourable opportunity of checking the daring abuse of theatrical representation, which had arrived to a most extravagant height. It was proposed to insert a clause, to ratify and confirm, if not enlarge the power of the lord chamberlain, in licensing plays, and at the same time insinuated to the house, that unless this addition was made, the king would not pass it. But Sir John Barnard strongly objected to this clause. He de-

clared that the power of the lord chamberlain was already too great, and had been often wantonly exercised, particularly in the prohibition of Polly. He should therefore withdraw this bill, and wait for another opportunity of introducing it, rather than establish by law, a power in a single officer, so much under the direction of the crown, a power which might be exercised in an arbitrary manner, and consequently attended with mischievous effects.

The attempt of Sir John Barnard having thus failed, the immorality of the drama increased, and the most indecent, seditious, and blasphemous pieces were performed, and resorted to with incredible eagerness. Among those who principally supported this low ribaldry was the celebrated Henry Fielding, who, though he never shone in the higher line of perfect comedy, wrote these dramatic satires in a style agreeable to the populace. One of his pieces, called Pasquin, which was acted in the theatre at the Haymarket, ridiculed, in the grossest terms, the three professions of divinity, law, and physic, and gave general offence to persons of morality. "Religion, laws, government, priests, judges, and ministers," observes Colley Cibber, "were laid flat at the feet of the Herculean satirist, this Drawcansir in wit, who spared neither friend nor foe, who to make his poetical fame immortal, like another Erostratus, set fire to his stage, by writing up an act of parliament to demolish

This piece was peculiarly offensive to the minister, because it contained many personal allusions and invectives. But as he was not willing to employ the power of government in a mere temporary prohibition of this and other performances, which would have been extremely unpopular, and not attended with permanent effects, he wished to avail himself of the present flagrant abuse, to prevent future representations, so disgraceful and indecorous.

In the course of the session, an opportunity offered, which he did not omit to seize. Giffard, the manager of Goodman's Fields theatre, brought to him a farce, called the Golden Rump, which had been proposed for exhibition. But it is uncertain whether the intentions of the manager were to request his advice on this occasion, or to extort a sum of money to prevent the representation.

The minister, however, paid the profits which might have accrued from the performance, and detained the copy. He then submitted extracts of the most exceptionable passages, abounding in profaneness, sedition, and blasphemy, to several members of both parties, who were shocked at the extreme licentiousness of the piece, and promised their support to remedy the evil. With their advice, concurrence, and promise of co-operation, he read the several extracts to the house, and a general conviction prevailed, on the necessity of checking the representation of such horrid effusions of treason and blasphemy. He

acted, however, with his usual prudence on this occasion. He did not bring forward, as is generally supposed, an act for subjecting all plays to the licence of the lord chamberlain, and restraining the number of playhouses, but contrived to introduce it by amending the vagrant act.

The bill was called, "A bill to explain and amend so much of an act, made in the twelfth year of the reign of queen Anne, intituled, an act for reducing the laws relating to rogues, vagabonds, sturdy beggars, and vagrants, and sending them whither they ought to be sent, as relates to the common players of interludes."* Leave being accordingly given on the 20th of March 1737, Pelham, Dodington, Howe, the master of the rolls, the attorney and solicitor general, were ordered to prepare it. During its rapid progress through the house, certain amendments were made, and two clauses were added. The first, which occasioned so much obloquy, empowered the lord chamberlain to prohibit the representation of any theatrical performance, and compelled all persons to send copies of any new plays, parts added to old plays, prologues, and epilogues, fourteen days before they were acted, and not to perform them, under forfeiture of £.50, and of the licence of the house. The second, which is said to have been added at the instigation of Sir John Barnard, operated in restraining the number of playhouses, by enjoin-

* Journals.

ing, that no person should be authorized to act except within the liberties of the city of Westminster, and where the king should reside.*

* 1. Every person who shall for hire, gain, or reward, act, represent, or perform, or cause to be acted, represented, or performed, any interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play, farce, or other entertainment of the stage, or any part or parts therein, in case such person shall not have any legal settlement in the place where the same shall be acted, represented, or performed, without authority, by virtue of letters patent from his majesty, his heirs, successors, or predecessors, or without licence from the lord chamberlain of his majesty's household for the time being, shall be deemed a rogue and a vagabond, within the intent and meaning of the said recited act, and shall be liable and subject to all such penalties and punishments, and by such methods of conviction, as are inflicted on, or appointed by the said act for the punishment of rogues and vagabonds who shall be found wandering, &c.

2. Any person having or not having any legal settlement, who shall without such authority or licence, act, &c. for hire, &c. any interlude, &c. every such person shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, &c.

3. No person shall for hire, &c. act, &c. &c. any new interlude, &c. or any part or parts therein, or any new act, scene, or other part added to any old interlude, &c. or any new prologue or epilogue, unless a true copy thereof be sent to the lord chamberlain of the king's household, &c. fourteen days at least before the acting, &c. together with an account of the playhouse, or other place where the same shall be, &c. the time wherein the same shall be first acted, &c. signed by the master or manager, or one, &c. of such playhouse, &c.

It shall be lawful for the said lord chamberlain, as often as he shall think fit, to prohibit the acting, &c. any interlude, &c. or any act, &c. &c. &c. thereof, or any prologue or epilogue; and in case any such persons shall for hire, &c. act any, &c. &c. before a copy shall be sent as aforesaid, or shall for hire, &c. &c. contrary to such prohibition, every person so offending shall, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of fifty pounds, and every grant, &c. (in case there be any such) under which the said master, &c. set up or continued such playhouse, &c. shall cease.

4. That no person or persons shall be authorized by virtue of, &c.

The bill is generally said to have been warmly opposed in both houses; but it is remarkable that no trace of this opposition, excepting the speech of lord Chesterfield, is to be found in the periodical publications of the times, which are filled with accounts of the other debates. It is also certain, that not a single petition * was presented against it, and not a single division appears in the journals of either house. Striking proofs, if any were still wanting, to show the general opinion in favour of its necessity.

The dispatch with which it was carried through both houses, affords additional evidence that it scarcely met with any resistance. The bill was ordered to be brought in on the 20th of May, read the 24th, a second time on the 25th, and committed to the whole house; ordered to be reported, with amendments, on the 26th, reported on the 27th, all amendments but one agreed to, and the bill ordered to be engrossed; passed on the first of June, and Mr. Pelham ordered to carry it to the lords. It was read the first time on the same day, the second time on

from his majesty, &c. or the lord chamberlain, to act, &c. any interlude &c. in any part of Great Britain, except in the city of Westminster, and within the liberties thereof, and in such places where his majesty, &c. shall reside, and during such residence only.

* * * * * * * * *

5. If any interlude, &c. shall be acted, &c. in any house or place, where wine or other liquors shall be sold, the same shall be deemed to be acted, &c. for gain, &c. Statutes at large, 17 G. 2. c. 28.

* Sir John Hawkins, in his Life of Johnson, asserts, that the manager of Goodman's Fields presented a petition against it, and was heard by counsel, but this petition was presented against Sir John Barnard's bill in 1735.

the 2nd, after a debate, carried in the affirmative; the third time on the 6th, returned to the commons on the 8th, without any amendments, and received the royal assent on the 21st.

It is most probable that lord Chesterfield alone spoke against the bill, and that his speech so deservedly admired, has been repeated by subsequent writers who copy each other, until a violent opposition to the measure has been supposed, which never existed.

Chesterfield did not confine his exertions to the house, but wrote against the new act, in a paper called Common Sense. His arguments, however, have little to recommend them, at a time when the propriety and utility of the measure against which they were directed, is generally conceded. The fatal evils which were predicted as the certain consequences of this bill, perpetual slavery, and the introduction of absolute authority, have not followed; the good effects which were expected from it, have been confirmed by never failing experience. While it suppressed the licentiousness, it has not destroyed the spirit of the drama; wit has not appeared less lovely and attractive, in promoting virtue and curbing vice with decency, than in recommending treason and obscenity; nor are the shafts of ridicule rendered useless, because, while they have preserved the power to do good, they are divested of the power to do mischief. "The facts, which have been detailed, evince, with sufficient conviction, that this act of parliament merely restored to the lord chamberlain,

the ancient authority which he possessed before the appointment of the master of the revels; armed him with legal power, in the place of customary privilege; and enabled him to execute, by warrantable means, the useful, but invidious trust, which experience had long required, and policy at length conferred."*

* Journals of the Lords and Commons. Chandler, for 1735. Lords' Debates, 1737. Colley Cibber's Apology. Jeremy Collier's View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage. Tindal, vol. 20. p. 350. Oldmixon, vol. 3. p. 192. Introduction to Biographia Dramatica. Gentleman's and London Magazine, 1737. Maty's Life of Chesterfield. Hawkin's Life of Johnson, p. 75. Smollett, vol. 3. p. 525. Burn's Justice, article Players. Chalmer's Apology for the Believers of the Shakespeare MSS. p. 471 to 543; to whose elaborate researches on this subject I have been principally indebted.

CHAPTER 48.

1737

Origin and Progress of the Misunderstanding between the King and Prince of Wales—Arrival of the Prince in England—Courted by Opposition—Marriage—Application to Parliament for an increase of his Allowance—Debate in Parliament on the Subject—He leaves Hampton Court on the Delivery of the Princess—Resentment of the King—Ordered to quit St. James's—Conduct of Walpole—Lord Chancellor Hardwicke—Of Opposition.

THIS year was marked by two domestic events, which proved highly prejudicial to the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, and greatly contributed to hasten the close of his administration; the public opposition of the prince of Wales, and the death of queen Caroline.

Frederick Louis, prince of Wales, was born in 1707, and continued at Hanover until he had attained the twenty-first year of his age.

George the Second had found, from his own experience, the embarrassments to which government might be exposed from the opposition of the heir apparent, and dreaded the arrival of a son who might inflame the violence of parties, and increase the ferment arising in the kingdom against the measures of the cabinet. He from time to time deferred his removal from Hanover, and did not send for him to England, until a

concurrence of circumstances rendered it impolitic to permit his longer residence on the continent.

Clamours were justly raised in England, that the heir apparent had received a foreign education, and was detained abroad, as if to keep alive an attachment to Hanover, in preference to Great Britain. The ministers at length ventured to remonstrate with the king on the subject, and the privy council formally represented the propriety of his residence in England. The king, however, still hesitated, when an event occurred, which decided his choice, and induced him to accelerate the prince's departure from Germany.

A long negotiation had taken place between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg, for a double marriage between the prince of Wales and the princess royal of Prussia, and the prince royal of Prussia, and the princess Amelia. This negotiation had commenced in the reign of George the First, and was eagerly promoted by his daughter Sophia Dorothy, who had espoused Frederick William king of Prussia. Both parties seem to have desired this union with equal anxiety; but the capricious and brutal temper of Frederick William, and his sudden secession from the treaty of Hanover, had so highly offended George the First, that he ceased to favour the proposed inter-marriages. Still farther obstacles were thrown in their way at the accession of George the Second. The two kings, from their early years, had conceived a violent

antipathy to each other. The system of politics adopted by England increased this misunderstanding. Frederick William had been lured by the Emperor to join the allies of Vienna, in opposition to those of Hanover, and his recruiting officers frequently made illegal inrolments on the Hanoverian territories.

In vain the queen of Prussia endeavoured to reconcile her husband and brother, and to promote the conclusion of the family union, which she so earnestly desired. The antipathy of the two monarchs increased instead of abating; and the king of Prussia was endeavouring to arrange another alliance for his son and daughter, which both they and his queen highly deprecated.

During the progress of this affair, the prince had formed an attachment to the princess of Prussia, and by the secret information of his aunt, the queen of Prussia, was apprized that her daughter felt an equal affection for him.

The prince was now twenty-one. His passion was inflamed by opposition, and being filled with apprehensions of losing the object of his affection, he adopted an expedient which proved the ardour of his attachment. He sent La Mothe, a Hanoverian officer, to Berlin, who obtained a private audience of the queen, in which he told her that he was commanded by the prince to declare his resolution of repairing incognito to Berlin, and secretly espousing her daughter, if their Prussian majesties would sanction this step with their approbation. At the same time he entreated the queen that it should

be communicated to no one but the king. The queen received the message with a transport of joy, approved the design, and promised to keep the secret inviolable. The next morning, however, she disclosed it to Dubourgeay, the English envoy, observing, that she believed him to be so much her friend as to partake of her satisfaction. Dubourgeay expressed his concern that so important a secret should be confided to him, and declared it his duty to send immediate information to the king of England. The queen, conscious of the error which she had unwarily committed, conjured him not to betray her confidence, but he persisted in his resolution; and a messenger was immediately dispatched.* The queen was greatly embarrassed at this unexpected incident, but trusted that the affair might be concluded before the return of the messenger from England; and so sanguine were their hopes of success, that the king of Prussia came from his hunting seat to Berlin, expecting the daily arrival of the intended bridegroom.

But while they were indulging these hopes, information was received that the prince had been summoned to England. George the Second, on the intelligence from Dubourgeay, dispatched colonel Launay, to Hanover for that purpose. The prince received these commands with respect, and instantly obeyed them. At the conclusion of a ball, he set out from Han-

* Polnitz, Histoire des quatre derniers Souverains de la Maison de Brandebourg Royale de Prusse, tom. 2. p. 182. 184.

over, accompanied only by Launay and a single domestic traversed Germany and Holland as a private gentleman, embarked at Helvetsluis, and arrived at the palace of St. James's, where he was coldly received by his father.

For some time after his arrival in England, the novelty of his situation, his little acquaintance with the language, his total ignorance of the constitution and manners of the country, and the dread which he seems to have entertained of his father's indignation, retained him in due submission, and prevented him from openly testifying his dissatisfaction. But as he increased in years, and became conscious of his dignified station, the estrangement of his father, and the restraint in which he was kept, naturally disgusted a young prince of high spirit, and increasing popularity, and the resentment which he had conceived against his parents, excited an antipathy to the minister, in whom they had placed implicit confidence. As he had a taste for the arts, and a fondness for literary pursuits, he sought the society of persons who were most conspicuous for their talents and knowledge. He was thus thrown into the company of Carteret, Chesterfield, Pulteney, Cobham, and Sir William Wyndham, who were considered as the leading characters for wit, talents, and urbanity.

His house became the rendezvous of young men of the highest expectations, Pitt, Lyttleton, and the Grenvilles, whom he afterwards took into his household, and made his associates,

The usual topic of conversation in select society, was abuse of the minister, and condemnation of his measures, urged with all the keenness of wit, and powers of eloquence. The prince found the men whose reputation was most eminent in literature, particularly Swift, Pope, and Thomson, adverse to Walpole, who was the object of their private and public satire.

But the person who principally contributed to increase his resentment against the king, and to foment his aversion to the minister, was lord Bolingbroke, who was characterised by the first poets of the age, as the "all accomplished St. John, the muse's friend." The prince was fascinated with his conversation and manners. His confident assertions, and popular declamations, his affected zeal to reconcile all ranks and descriptions, the energy with which he decried the baneful spirit of party, and his plausible theories of a perfect government, without influence or corruption, acting by prerogative, were calculated to dazzle and captivate a young prince of high spirit and sanguine disposition, and induce him to believe that the minister was forming a systematic plan to overthrow the constitution, and that the cause of opposition was that of honour and liberty.

So early as 1734, the misunderstanding between the father and son had increased to a very alarming degree, and the prince encouraged by opposition took a very injudicious step, which was calculated to provoke an immediate and open rupture. He repaired to the anti-chamber,

and without any previous arrangement, requested an immediate audience. The king delayed admitting him till he had sent for Sir Robert Walpole, on whose arrival, he expressed his indignation against his son, and would have proceeded to instant extremities, had not the minister contrived to calm his resentment. He strongly inculcated moderation, and persuaded the king to hear with complacency what the prince wished to communicate.

On being admitted, the prince made three requests, in a tone and manner which indicated a spirit of perseverance. The first was, to serve a campaign on the Rhine in the Imperial army; the second related to the augmentation of his revenue, at the same time insinuating, that he was in debt; the third was, his settlement by a suitable marriage. To the first and third points, the king made no answer; in regard to the second, he showed an inclination to comply, if the prince would behave with due respect to the queen.

The king had suppressed his anger on these demands of his son; but his resentment broke out with redoubled violence, when rumours were circulated, that the prince would apply to parliament for an augmentation of his revenue. The queen exerted all her efforts to soften the king's indignation, and the minister used every argument which policy suggested, to incline him to moderation, and to induce him not to drive the prince wholly into the arms of opposition. These exertions had a temporary

effect.* The rupture was suspended, and the hopes of opposition were disappointed.

The passion which the prince had entertained for the princess Frederica, being thwarted by his parents, preyed upon his mind and increased his disgust, and when the proposal of another union was imparted to him, he remonstrated with great marks of offended sensibility, and expressed his repugnance to espouse a princess whom he had not seen, instead of one whom he had seen and approved. When the arrangement was made for his marriage with Augusta, princess of Saxe Gotha, the prince of Wales sent for baron Borck, the Prussian minister, and complained, with much indignation, that the king his father compelled him to renounce all hopes of espousing a Prussian princess. He requested him to lay his grief before the king his master, and to assure him that he was determined to have resisted all compulsion, and was only induced to agree to the alliance with the princess of Saxe Gotha, on being informed by his mother, that the king of Prussia had refused to give him his daughter in marriage. He expressed his heartfelt regret that he was not permitted to have the honour of forming an union with a family which he loved more than his own, and to which, from his earliest infancy, all his desires had been directed. He hoped, nevertheless, that the king would not withdraw his favour and friendship. He

* Lettre de Mons. de Loss à Mons. de Bruhl, sans datte; de Mons. John à Mons. Von Hagen, 16 de Julliet, 1734. Correspondence.

testified his concern, that he was to be connected with a house from which he could not expect that support, which he should have found in the king of Prussia, and lamented his hard fate in being condemned to remain under the severe control of the queen his mother. He concluded, by observing, that he must submit to his destiny, that he could not see, without grief, the king of England disdaining the friendship of a great monarch, without which the ruin of his house must infallibly ensue.* The letter, in which Borck gave an account of this indiscreet conference to his master, fell into the hands of the king, and greatly irritated his inflammable temper.

On the 27th of April 1736, the prince of Wales espoused the princess of Saxe Gotha, in whose beauty, accomplishments, and virtues, he forgot his former passion. But the marriage, instead of removing the unfortunate misunderstanding between the father and son, rather had a contrary tendency. The increased expenses of the prince's household, without an adequate increase of income, rendered his situation still more irksome. His revenue, although enlarged from £.36,000 to £.50,000, with the emoluments of the duchy of Cornwall, did not amount to £.60,000, a sum the prince and his friends deemed insufficient to support the dignity of his station. It became a matter of public animadversion, that out of a civil list of

* Letter from Borck to the king of Prussia, December 23, 1735, Orford Papers.

£.800,000, he received only £.50,000 a year, although the king, when prince of Wales had received £.100,000 out of a civil list of only £.700,000. But while this was industriously circulated, it was not considered that George the Second, when prince of Wales, had a large family, and that he had several younger children, for whom he was to make a provision out of the civil list, which was not the case of George the First.

The marriage of the heir apparent greatly increased his popularity. The affability of his manners, the courtesy of his deportment, were contrasted with the phlegmatic reserve of George the Second. His protection of letters, his fondness for the polite arts, and his rising merits, became the favourite theme of popular applause, and of parliamentary declamation among the members of opposition.

It is remarkable, that the address of congratulation to the king, on the nuptials of the prince of Wales with the princess of Saxe Gotha, was moved by Pulteney, on the 29th of April, and that the principal speakers in the prince's praise, were those who uniformly opposed the measures of government. On this memorable occasion, William Pitt made his maiden speech, in a strain of declamation, which a contemporary historian describes as not inferior to the great models of antiquity, "it being more ornamented than Demosthenes, and less diffuse than Cicero."* Both he and his friend Lyttleton,

* Tindal.

who also first spoke on the same occasion, described the prince as a most dutiful son; descanted on his filial obedience and respectful submission to the will of his royal parents, and expatiated, with ostentatious energy, on his generous love of liberty, and just reverence for the British constitution. In affecting to praise the king for gratifying the impatient wishes of a loyal people, they gave the prior merit to the prince, for having requested a marriage, so necessary to the public good, and ascribed only a secondary merit to the king for granting the request.

The manner in which this debate * was conducted, the warm panegyric bestowed on the prince, the cold praises given to the king, and the acrimonious censures of the minister, gave great offence, and tended still farther to widen the breach.

At length, the misunderstanding arose to so great a height, that the prince threw himself into the arms of opposition. Bolingbroke, who had long advised the most violent measures, now laid down a systematic plan of proceeding, to be followed by the prince, the first step of which was an emancipation from all dependence on the crown, by the acquisition of a permanent allowance of £.100,000 per annum, which the king should be compelled to grant, at the remonstrance, and under the guaranty of parliament.

From the time that this scheme was first

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 222.

suggested by Bolingbroke, and which had been unadvisedly insinuated to the king, in 1734, before it was maturely weighed, the prince seems to have persisted in his resolution of appealing to parliament. Soon after his marriage, he mentioned his intention to the queen. The queen, perceiving that any advice would be ineffectual, affected to consider it as idle and chimerical. She treated it as a jest, and declared that there was not the least prospect of success, but her remonstrance had no effect. Urged on by Bolingbroke, whose last advice, before his retreat into France was, to pursue unremittingly this one favourite object, the prince at length determined to lay his case before parliament. He accordingly applied to the most respectable members of opposition, without any previous intimation, and less with a view of asking advice, than of demanding support. Pulteney, though surprised at the unexpected request, declared a hearty inclination on his own part to promote the measure, but added, that he must consult his friends. Finding, however, the prince determined to persevere, he engaged for the unanimous consent of his particular friends, and offered to make the motion himself. Sir John Barnard promised his support, and Sir William Wyndham answered for the Tories; observing, that they had long desired an opportunity of showing their regard and attachment to the prince. He also declared, that all his party were anxious to prove by their zeal, the falsity of the reproaches cast

against them, that they were Jacobites, and to show that they were misrepresented under that name.

Dodington, afterwards lord Melcombe, was the first person connected with government, to whom the prince imparted his design, and to him it was declared only on the 7th of February. He gave on that occasion a striking proof of firmness and integrity, by declining to support a scheme pregnant with so many evils, and made strong and sensible remonstrances to induce the prince not to press any farther a measure which must render all who voted desperate either with the possessor of, or successor to the crown; but all his efforts were ineffectual.*

No information was conveyed to the king, and the minister did not receive the least intimation of the business, or even suspect it, until the 13th of February. He was never before engaged in any transaction which gave him more concern or greater embarrassment. He was aware that £.50,000 a year was inadequate to the dignified station of the heir apparent, and yet convinced that the king, incensed as he was against his son, could not be persuaded to increase that allowance. He was not however intimidated by a dread of offending the heir apparent, who might one day become his master, and did not shrink from his duty to his sovereign and to his country; but resolved to support the king in his just prerogative, and to oppose a measure, which he considered as no less uncon-

* Doddington's Diary.

stitutional than disrespectful. He lamented, however, that the king had imprudently delayed to make the prince a permanent allowance of £.50,000 a year, in the same manner as George the First had granted his allowance when prince of Wales, and that he had not settled a jointure on the princess. Walpole was not ignorant that the prince derived from these circumstances just cause of complaint, and that until that was removed, the opposition would have great advantage in the argument. In consequence of these sentiments, he used all his efforts to obtain a concession of these points, and finally conquered the repugnance of the king.

But the ungracious manner in which this was offered, widened rather than repaired the breach. The minister summoned a meeting at his own house, February 19, at which were present, the dukes of Newcastle, Grafton, and Devonshire, the earl of Scarborough, Horace Walpole and lord Hardwicke, recently nominated lord chancellor, on the death of lord Talbot.* Walpole informed them, that he had, though not without the greatest difficulty, prevailed on the king to render the prince's allowance independent, and to settle the princess's jointure, and that his majesty had been pleased to give him authority to announce to the house of commons, when the motion was made, his consent to both these points. The chancellor objected, that if this de-

* Lord Hardwicke has left a circumstantial narrative of this important transaction, from which I have selected the most interesting particulars. Hardwicke Papers.

claration should be first made in the house of commons, without properly acquainting the prince, or his treasurer, it would have the appearance of an intended surprise. He added, that the friends of the royal family might think themselves ill used, if they were reduced to so great a difficulty as that of voting in a dispute between the king and the prince, when perhaps such previous information as he recommended might have prevented the motion.

To this sensible representation, the minister replied, that it was in vain to imagine the king could be reduced to so low an act of submission, as to permit any private communication of this kind, after the steps the prince had already taken. The suggestion however, of the chancellor made a due impression, and Walpole persuaded the king to send a message to the prince, by some of the lords of the cabinet council.

Accordingly, on the 21st of February the day in which lord Hardwicke received the great seal, while he was waiting in the anti-chamber, with the dukes of Newcastle and Argyle, the earl of Wilmington, and other lords of the council, Sir Robert Walpole came out of the king's chamber in a great hurry, holding a paper in his hand. Calling all the lords of the cabinet to the upper end of the room, he read to them the draught of a message, in his own hand-writing, and acquainted them, that it was the king's pleasure, it should be immediately carried to the prince, by the lord chancellor, lord president, lord steward, and lord chamberlain.

The draught was not fairly transcribed, and several of the lords complained, that the whole business was transacted with such precipitation, that sufficient leisure was not allowed to consider the terms of the message. The time pressed extremely, and the place was highly improper for such momentous consultation. For the company which assembled to attend the levee filled the room, and could not avoid hearing many of the things which passed in the course of conversation. The chancellor, however, ventured to object to the expressions, "*the undutiful measures which his majesty is informed your royal highness intends to pursue*;" but it was replied by the minister that the king insisted on the word *undutiful*, and that it was with great difficulty he was induced not to add severer epithets. The chancellor, however, persisting in his objection, the word *intends*, was changed for *hath been advised to pursue*.

The chancellor took Walpole aside, and expostulated with him on the hardship of making such a disagreeable errand the first act of his office. The minister answered, that he had hinted this to the king, *as far as he durst venture in so nice a case*, but the king prevented all farther discussion, by exclaiming, *my chancellor shall go*.

The expostulations of the chancellor, however, produced a variation in point of form. Instead of only four officers of the crown, the whole cabinet council was ordered to convey the message. It then growing late, Sir Robert Walpole acquainted them that business of consequence

was expected in the house of commons, that he and Sir Charles Wager must attend, and they both went away, leaving the foul draught of the message. Lord Ilay, under a pretence of attending the house of lords, also retired.

When the ceremony of giving the great seal was over, the remaining lords of the cabinet * deliberated in the council chamber on the mode of executing their charge. The message was not yet copied, and a rumour was circulated, that the prince was going to the house of commons. The lord steward and the lord chamberlain were deputed to inform him, that the lords of the cabinet were ordered to attend with a message from the king, and requested to know where he would receive it. He answered, in his own apartment. As soon as the fair copy was compared with the draught, the lords went to the prince, and being shown into the levee room, the chancellor kissed his hand, on being appointed to his high office, and received his congratulations. The door being then closed, he read the message over audibly and distinctly, as follows:

"His majesty has commanded us to acquaint your royal highness, in his name, that upon your royal highness's marriage he immediately took into his royal consideration the settling a proper jointure upon the princess of Wales; but his

* The Lord Chancellor, the earl of Wilmington, the dukes of Dorset and Grafton, the duke of Richmond, master of the horse, the duke of Argyle, commander in chief, the duke of Newcastle, the earl of Pembroke, groom of the stole, the earl of Scarborough, and lord Harrington.

sudden going abroad, and his late indisposition since his return, had hitherto delayed the execution of these his gracious intentions; from which short delay his majesty did not apprehend any inconveniences could arise, especially since no application had, in any manner been made to him upon this subject by your royal highness: and that his majesty hath now given orders for settling a jointure upon the princess of Wales, as far as he is enabled by law, suitable to her high rank and dignity, which he will, in proper time, lay before his parliament, in order to be rendered certain and effectual, for the benefit of her royal highness.

"The king has further commanded us to acquaint your royal highness, that although your royal highness has not thought fit, by any application to his majesty, to desire, that your allowance of £.50,000 per annum, which is now paid by monthly payments, at the choice of your royal highness, preferably to quarterly payments, might, by his majesty's further grace and favour, be rendered less precarious; his majesty, to prevent the bad consequences which he apprehends may follow, from the undutiful measures, which his majesty is informed, your royal highness has been advised to pursue, will grant to your royal highness for his majesty's life, the said £.50,000 per annum, to be issuing out of his majesty's civil list revenues over and above your royal highness's revenues arising from the duchy of Cornwall, which his majesty thinks a very competent allowance, considering his

numerous issue, and the great expenses which do, and must necessarily attend an honourable provision for his whole royal family."

The chancellor having concluded, there was a short pause, and a profound silence ensued. The prince looking about him, said, my lords, "Am I to return an immediate answer?" to which the chancellor replying, "if your royal highness pleases," the prince then delivered a verbal message to the following import:

"He desired the lords to lay him, with all humility, at his majesty's feet; and to assure his majesty that he had, and ever should retain, the utmost duty for his royal person; that he was very thankful for any instance of his majesty's goodness to him, or the princess, and for his majesty's gracious intention for settling a jointure upon her royal highness; but that, as to the message, the affair was now out of his hands, and therefore he could give no answer to it." After which, he used many dutiful expressions towards the king, and then added, "*Indeed, my lords, it is in other hands, I am sorry for it,*" or to that effect. He concluded, with earnestly desiring the lords to represent his answer to his majesty in the most respectful and dutiful manner.*

When this answer was reported to the king in the evening, by the lords, he looked displeased, but made no reply.

The situation of the minister was rendered more embarrassing at this particular period, from the ill health of the king, who was at that time

* Chandler, vol. 9. p. 801, 803.

so indisposed as to give real apprehension, that he could not long survive. Hence Bolingbroke, in a letter * to Sir William Wyndham, expresses his astonishment at Walpole's imprudence, in offending the heir apparent, who was likely to become his master, and the duchess of Marlborough thought his conduct no less incomprehensible. † This circumstance had given to opposition a great accession of strength, but had no effect on the conduct of Walpole.

On the 22nd Pulteney made his motion for an address, requesting the king to settle £.100,000 a year on the prince of Wales, and the same jointure on the princess, as the queen had when she was princess of Wales, assuring the king, that the house would enable him effectually to fulfil the same.

The great points which Pulteney, and those who supported the motion, laboured to prove, were, that the prince had a claim to the proposed allowance, founded on equity and good policy, and a legal right, founded on law and precedent; and that the revenue of the civil list had been granted to George the First, and afterwards augmented under George the Second, on the express, or at least implied, condition that, out of that revenue, the sum of £.100,000 should be

* Correspondence, Feb. 3. 1738. Period VII.

† [Feb. 6, 1736.] Heard this day, from a pretty good hand, that his majesty has been worse than they cared to own, but upon remedies they applied, his fever lessened, and was better. However, the physicians say, that if he does not get over this illness, he cannot live a twelvemonth. Opinions of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 36.

reserved for the prince of Wales, as a permanent and independent establishment, which the king had it not in his power to withhold. Pulteney supported the principles on which the motion was founded with great ability, and with a long series of historical references to heirs apparent and presumptive to the crown, who, he maintained, had received an independent and permanent allowance. He concluded by anticipating several cogent objections to the proposed address, arising from the impropriety and indecency of interposing between the king and the prince, between the father and the son, and of interfering with the prerogative of the crown.

The minister in reply, began by observing, that he never rose to speak upon any subject with a deeper regret, and greater reluctance, than he did on the present important affair. He expressed the concern and embarrassment under which most members of that house must lie, in giving their votes or opinion. If they declared in favour of the motion, they must seem to injure the royal father, their sovereign, or by declining the motion, seem to injure the royal son, and apparent heir to the crown. But he would declare his sentiments with freedom, because from his *personal* knowledge of the two great characters, he was satisfied that neither of them would think himself injured by any gentleman for giving his opinion or vote freely in parliament; and he was convinced that the prince of Wales had so much wisdom, and such a true sense of filial duty, that he would never consider

as a favour bestowed on him, what had the least tendency towards offering an indignity to his father.

He supported the prerogative of the crown, and the right of the king to dispose of his civil revenues, without the interference of parliament, and to suffer no control in the management of his own family. In the course of his speech, he communicated the substance of the message which had been sent by the king to the prince, and declared that £.50,000 a year, exclusive of the revenues arising from the duchy of Cornwall, was a competent allowance, and as much as the king could afford out of the civil list He expatiated on the impropriety of interposing between the father and son, deprecated the attempt to make a breach between them, entered into an historical examination of the several precedents mentioned by Pulteney, and denied that any foundation for such a parliamentary interposition could be found, except a single precedent under Henry the Sixth, whose reign was so weak, that the parliament found it necessary to assume several rights and privileges, to which they were not properly entitled. He declared, that the prince had neither a claim from equity nor good policy, and still less a right, founded on law or precedent; and he mentioned that the revenues of the civil list had been granted unconditionally to the king, without the most distant allusion to a stipulation, that £.100,000 per annum should be paid to the prince of Wales.

The reasons urged by Walpole, in contradiction to those advanced by opposition, sufficiently proved, to all dispassionate persons, that the motion was not founded on law, good policy, or precedent, and were not invalidated by the reply of Pulteney, in summing up the arguments on both sides. But a confident and plausible assertion, advanced by a supporter of the motion, made a deep impression on the house, and seemed to vindicate the proceedings of the prince, and to arraign the conduct of the king.

"By the regulation and settlement of the prince's household, as made some time since by his majesty himself, the yearly expense comes to £.63,000, without allowing one shilling to his royal highness for acts of charity and generosity. By the message now before us, it is proposed to settle upon him only £.50,000 a year, and yet from this sum we must deduct the land tax, which, at two shillings in the pound, amounts to £.5,000 a year, we must likewise deduct the sixpenny duty to the civil list lottery, which amounts to £. 1,250 a year, and we must also deduct the fees payable at the exchequer, which amount to about £. 750 a year more: All these deductions amount to £.7,000 a year, and reduce the £.50,000, proposed to be settled upon him by the message, to £.43,000 a year. Now as his royal highness has no other estate but the duchy of Cornwall, which cannot be reckoned, at the most, above £.9,000, his whole yearly revenue can amount but to £.52,000, and yet the yearly expense of his household, according

to his majesty's own regulation, is to amount to £.63,000, without allowing his royal highness one shilling for the indulgence of that generous and charitable disposition, with which he is known to be endued in a very eminent degree. Suppose then we allow him but £.10,000 a year for the indulgence of that laudable disposition, his whole yearly expense, by his majesty's own acknowledgment, must then amount to £.73,000, and his yearly income, according to this message, can amount to no more than £.52,000. Is this, Sir, showing any respect to his merit? Is this providing for his generosity? Is it not reducing him to a real want, even with respect to his necessities, and consequently, to an unavoidable dependance, and a vile pecuniary dependance too, upon his father's ministers and servants? I confess, Sir, when I first heard this motion made, I was wavering a good deal in my opinion; but this message has confirmed me. I now see, that without the interposition of parliament, his royal highness the prince of Wales, the heir apparent to our crown, must be reduced to the greatest straits, the most insufferable hardships." *

Full credit was, at the time, given to this statement, as well because it was ostentatiously displayed by two of the prince's servants during the debate, as because the minister, to prevent great heats and animosities, made no immediate answer, and several persons were induced by this representation to vote in favour of the motion,

* Chandler.

which was negatived by a majority of only 234, against 204. *

This small majority of 30 would have been reduced to a minority, had Sir William Wyndham been able to fulfil the promise of support, which he made to the prince in the name of his party. But forty-five Tories considered the interference of parliament as hostile to the principles of the British constitution, highly democratic, and such a dangerous innovation, that they quitted the house in a body before the division; an act highly honourable to those who refused to sacrifice their principles to their party.

On the 23rd, the same motion was made in the house of peers by lord Carteret, and a similar debate ensued. It was negatived by a large majority of 103 against 40, and a protest was inserted only by fourteen peers. †

But although this unconstitutional proposition was thus thrown out in parliament; yet the smallness of the majority in the lower house, proved the difficulties under which the minister laboured. His cause was highly unpopular. The opposition introduced the question in every shape and form which was most likely to attract the public attention, and in the periodical papers and pamphlets, written with all the address and subtlety which the great leaders of the minority could supply. Among other pamphlets which were circulated with zeal, and read with avidity,

* Journals. † Lords' Debates.

was one intituled, "A Letter from a member of Parliament to his Friend in the Country, on the Motion for addressing the King to settle £.100,000 per Annum on his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales." This work was written with such an air of candour, and plausibility of argument, and yet contained so much bitterness and acrimony, that the minister himself revised the answer, which was composed by lord Hervey, called "An Examination of the Facts and Reasons contained in a Pamphlet intituled, A Letter, &c." In this work, Sir Robert Walpole made several insertions, which prove the importance of the letter, and which are still extant in his own hand-writing among the Orford Papers. He here commented with greater freedom than he could venture to do in parliament, and answered the arguments in favour of the motion with more spirit than moderation, and more indignation than temper.

That part of his insertions which is most worthy of notice, was the answer given to the statement made in the house, respecting the prince's establishment, said to have been regulated by the king. From a fair investigation of the paper which the prince's officers had shown to the house, he demonstrated, that it was not an *establishment,* but a calculation founded on the expenditure of preceding years; that it was exaggerated and overcharged in almost every branch; and that so far from having been regulated by the king, his majesty had not even a knowledge of its existence.

The indiscretion of the prince in bringing so unconstitutional a question before parliament, contrary to the judgment of his real friends; the violence of his counsellors, and particularly the petulant and indecorous insinuations thrown out against the queen * in the course of the debate, highly offended the king, and rendered the breach between the father and son irreparable. Coldness, reserve, and distance increased. The prince considered himself a state prisoner in the palace of his father, pined for a release, and seized the first plausible pretence of emancipating himself from the control of his parents.

The royal family being at Hampton Court, the princess of Wales was seized with the pangs of child-birth on the 31st of July; and the prince, without the least intimation to the king and queen, hurried her away to St. James's, where she was that night delivered of a princess, before the queen, or any of the officers of state, who were accustomed to be present, could arrive.

The prince apologized for his abrupt departure to the queen, who went the next morning to

* Walpole having in his speech maintained that the parliament had no right to interfere in the creation or maintenance of a prince of Wales, and that in the case of Richard, who on the death of his father, the Black Prince, was created prince of Wales, in consequence of an address or petition from parliament, that measure was in all probability directed by Edward the Third. In reply to this assertion, the opposition indecorously alluded to the influence of queen Caroline over the king, and her preference of the duke of Cumberland to the prince of Wales, by observing, that Edward doated in his old age, and was solely governed by Alice Pierce, and *his second son* the duke of Lancaster.

visit the princess. He observed, that the suddenness with which his wife was seized, rendered it necessary to obtain immediate assistance, and that it was thought most prudent to return to London, where good assistance was to be obtained, rather than wait till the physicians and midwives could arrive at Hampton Court, which might be too late. He entreated the queen to explain to the king the motives which induced him to retire from Hampton Court, without intimating his design, which the hurry of his departure had alone prevented; and he professed also his intention of waiting on the king that morning. The queen advised him to delay this visit for a few days, in which the prince acquiesced. He repeated the same apology to Sir Robert Walpole and lord Harrington, who had come by the royal command to be present at the birth. The king, however, was not moved by this justification, but resolved to express his resentment in a manner no less public, than that in which he conceived the indignity was offered. A draught of a message was accordingly prepared by Sir Robert Walpole, and submitted by him to the consideration of the lord chancellor, lord Wilmington, and lord Harrington. The chancellor, with a view to show great tenderness to the situation of the princess, and to gain time for conciliation, before the most aggravating circumstances of the rupture were rendered permanent, and incapable of modification, by being committed to writing,

disapproved the draught, and proposed another in more soft and gentle terms.

"The king hath commanded me to acquaint your royal highness, that his majesty is most heartily rejoiced at the safe delivery of the princess, but that, on account of certain circumstances in your royal highness's behaviour relating to that event, which have given his majesty just offence, he thinks it not proper to see you, with the particular reasons whereof he will cause your royal highness to be acquainted in due time."

Lord Wilmington, who seldom declared himself explicitly on any subject, supported, however, with unusual warmth, the original draught; and as lord Harrington was silent, the chancellor's alteration was rejected, and the original carried. On the 3d of August, it was sent to the prince by lord Essex, the lord of the bedchamber in waiting, and contained these words:

"The king has commanded me to acquaint your royal highness, that his majesty most heartily rejoices at the safe delivery of the princess, but that your carrying away her royal highness from Hampton Court, the then residence of the king, the queen, and the family, under the pains, and certain indications of immediate labour, to the imminent danger and hazard both of the princess and her child, after sufficient warnings for a week before, to have made the necessary preparations for this happy event, without acquainting his majesty or the queen

with the circumstances the princess was in, or giving them the least notice of your departure, is looked upon by the king to be such a deliberate indignity, offered to himself and to the queen, that he has commanded me to acquaint your royal highness, that he resents it to the highest degree."

In reply to this message, the prince wrote a letter, in which, after expressing his mortification at having displeased the king, he justified his conduct, detailed the same motives as he had stated to the queen in person, and requested permission to wait upon his majesty the next morning. This request having been rejected, the prince repeated, in another submissive letter, August 4, his earnest hopes of being restored to favour. No answer was returned to this application; but a message from the king was conveyed by the earl of Dunmore, appointing the baptism to be performed on the 29th, declaring, that he should send the lord chancellor to stand god-father as his proxy, the queen's lady of the bedchamber for the queen, and desiring the princess to appoint one of her ladies of the bedchamber to represent the dowager duchess of Saxe Gotha, the other god-mother.

The prince took this opportunity to reiterate, both to the king and queen, his application for pardon, with increasing earnestness and humility. His entreaties, however, had no effect. The king adopted the violent resolution of making a total separation between his family and that of the prince, by dismissing him from his

residence in the palace of St. James's. In taking this resolution, he was, if not confirmed, at least not opposed by the minister.

The prudence and moderation of the chancellor saw the danger of such a separation. However disagreeable his interposition might be, both to the king and Walpole, he thought it his duty to prevent, if possible, such extremities. With this view, he went over to New Park, and had a long and interesting conference with Sir Robert Walpole.*

"He laid it down as a principle, that in this nice affair, two great points were always to be pursued. First, the real and essential interest of the king and his family, in which the whole of the kingdom was involved; and next, the support of that authority and reverence, which was due to his majesty. That it was the duty of his ministers and servants to endeavour to combine both these views, and in their conduct not to lose sight of either. He could not help thinking, that if there was a disposition to it, a reconciliation might be effected consistently with both; but if that should be found impossible, a total separation must indeed be submitted to. However, he begged leave to lay before him several considerations, which seemed material in this great question, some whereof distinguished the case from that of the quarrel in the late reign, and made the present breach more formidable.

"1. It ought to be considered what influence

* This conference is given verbatim, from lord Hardwicke's interesting narrative before mentioned.

it would have on the side of the question, which had been once moved in parliament, and was expected to be brought there again, viz. the prince's demand of a larger allowance, and this upon different suppositions. It appeared to him, that if the king should be finally in the right, and the prince continue, as he was certainly at first, on the affair of the departure, in the wrong, it would strengthen the king as to that question; for nobody could, with any shadow of reason, maintain that the king could with decency be addressed to increase his son's allowance, while he was standing out in defiance. But on the other hand, it must be attended to, that this offence was such as to admit of a satisfaction between a father and a son; and if the world should think the prince had made a proper submission, and yet the king turn him out of doors, it would strengthen the prince in his demand; since it might then be said, that the king had causelessly obliged him to live by himself, with an increase of family, at a great expense. He added, that it must be expected that even those who least wished a reconciliation, would advise him to make such a submission, when they were sure it could not, or would not, be accepted.

"2. In the next place, the situation and circumstances of the royal family deserved the greatest attention. In the late reign, the difference concerned only the king and prince there were no other children to be affected by it. The moment the breath was out of the late king's body, it was at an end as to the royal family

though particular subjects might feel its effects. Now the case was far different. A queen, consort, the duke and four princesses, not to include the princess of Orange, must necessarily be, to a degree, involved in it. If the prince should survive his father, he must, and by the course of law and nature, ought to reign. All these will be more or less in his power. The queen possibly least of all is; but how far the honey-moon of a new reign may carry men as to her large jointure, no one can foresee. The others absolutely. Yet these must now, as they justly deserve, live at court in the sun-shine of the king and queen's favour, the prince being excluded. This will naturally breed an alienation of affection, great envying and much ill blood, which may break out into fatal consequences, when the prince shall find himself their sovereign. Add to this, that it is not probable any settlement will ever be obtained from the parliament to make cadets of the royal family independent of any person who shall wear the crown.

"3. He next considered the case of the prince's children. Either the king must take the custody of them, or leave them with his royal highness. If he should take them, having a favourite younger son, and several daughters, justly dear to him, what jealousies and suspicions may not arise in case of accidents. Malice may even suggest what was once believed in France, of the late duke of Orleans. If the king should suffer these branches of the royal family to remain with the prince, will it not greatly weaken

the former, and strengthen the latter? And at length, they will be bred up under the same influence which is now objected to their father.

"4. As to the administration, what an inundation of pensions did the breach in the late reign produce! What a weight did that bring on my lord Sunderland's ministry! And it should be considered whether even that miserable expedient will be found practicable under this king. The present demands of mankind will rise on one side in proportion as greater hopes are held out on the other. It put lord Sunderland on strong measures to secure himself, which yet he could not carry. Witness the peerage bill, wherein were several provisions tempting to the Whigs, and yet they rejected it.

"5. It will make a coalition between the Whigs desperate and impossible. Before this, the Whigs in opposition wanted a head, became liable to the disagreeable imputation of constantly acting with the Jacobites; had no prospect of ever coming into any share of power, but by re-uniting with their old friends. They will now find a head in the prince; and he, being the immediate successor in the protestant line, will be an irrefragable answer to the reproach of Jacobitism. Besides, the Whigs, as a party, will, in good policy, not wish such a coalition, unless it could be accompanied with a reconciliation between the father and son, lest it should throw the successor wholly into the hands of the Tories, and make their cause desperate when he comes to take possession.

Whereas, by having one set of Whigs in the prince's favour, the party will have a fair chance to be preserved from ruin when that event shall arrive.

"6. Lastly, it must not be forgotten, that if the king should carry his resentment so far as to remove his son out of his palace, it will be necessary that some account of a transaction of this high nature in the royal family, should be given to foreign courts. This measure was taken in the late reign. If the prince should at length fully submit himself to his father, and do that which the world shall judge a complete satisfaction for the late offence, what reasons can openly be assigned to justify such a conduct? He would not say that reasons might not be suggested, from a series of conduct offensive and provoking in many other respects; but when once those come to be coolly examined, he suspected whether they would be found such, as it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, publicly to avow and explain."

"The minister allowed all these to be considerations of great weight, without attempting to take off their force, except as to that of the prince's children, who, he said, were intended to be left with their parents, whilst of tender age, only for nurture. The great point on which he laid his stress was, that the king had now an advantage, by the prince having put himself so much in the wrong, which ought not to be parted with. That he was apprehensive there must be a total breach before there could be a

complete reconciliation; and to make up the particular difference about carrying away the princess from Hampton Court, without the grand point, would not be so much as skinning over the sore, which would infallibly break out again worse than ever. That it was impossible to reconcile the whole without money, and that could not now be obtained; neither was it fit to advise the king to make such an advance, until his son, by proper acts of submission, and declared alteration of conduct, should put himself in a condition to deserve it.

"As to the submission already made, he enlarged much on the offensive behaviour to the queen; and in particular, objected that, although the king in his message had charged the *fact to be a high indignity to himself and to the queen*, the prince had not in any of his letters asked her pardon, or so much as made an excuse to her majesty for what he had done."

"Hereupon, the chancellor took occasion to observe, that this was manifestly the game of those advisers of the prince, who intended to prevent a reconciliation; and as this last was their point, they could not play their cards better. That consequently the most effectual method of disappointing it must be the best play on the other side. And as the queen had great talents, as well as great power with the king, would not it become her wisdom to suppress the woman's resentment, and take the contrary part to that into which these men wished to drive her? That in his opinion, if her

majesty continued unmoved by their ill usage, and in spite of all their provocations would reconcile the father and son, she would endear herself to the nation more than ever, and make an absolute conquest of all her enemies at once."

These sensible representations not only had no effect on the minister, but even seem to have made a contrary impression; for he said afterwards to some of his friends, "The lord chancellor made me a long visit, and talked like an angel on the subject of the prince; yet I thought his arguments made for my conclusion rather than his," which induced the chancellor to lament the shortness of human foresight, and exclaim, in the words of Virgil,

"Nescia mens hominum fati, sortisque futuræ,
"Et servare modum rebus sublata secundis.
"Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
"Intactum Pallanta et cum spolia ista diemque,
"Oderit." *

Although it cannot be denied that the conduct of the prince had given great and deserved offence to the king and queen, and that in particular his behaviour to the queen had been highly disrespectful; yet it must at the same time be lamented, that the minister involved in

"O mortals! blind in fate, who never know
"To bear high fortune, or endure the low!
"The time shall come, when Turnus, but in vain,
"Shall wish untouch'd the trophies of the slain,
"Shall wish the fatal belt were far away,
"And curse the dire remembrance of the day."
DRYDEN'S VIRGIL.

the interests of party, the feuds of the royal family. He considered the struggle as much between himself and opposition, as between the king and prince, and knowing the prince's aversion to his ministry, viewed a cordial reconciliation as tending to his removal.

Under these impressions he had on the 5th of September drawn, by order of the king, the substance of a message to be delivered to the prince, ordering him to remove from the palace of St. James; and he communicated it confidentially to the lord chancellor, the duke of Newcastle, and Pelham, for their opinion, before it should be submitted to the whole council. He produced two letters, sent by the prince to the king and queen after the christening; and acquainted them, that the king was not satisfied with the submission made by his son. He added, with regard to the king himself, they were mere words, and calculated to be offensive and provoking to the queen. None of the letters contained any assurance of a change of conduct, or of acting in subordination to his father's will for the future. The prince was entirely under the influence and direction of persons whom the king had thought fit to remove from his councils and service, and who were in a determined opposition to all his measures; and lord Chesterfield and lord Carteret were known to be with him in private every day, and were called into his closet after the levee, as regularly as the king's ministers were called into his. He recapitulated many particulars, to show that

the prince had avowedly set himself at the head of a faction, in opposition to the king, and that these letters were understood by the king to proceed from their dictates, and intended only to amuse and deceive him. That things being in this situation, the king had resolved not to permit his son to reside any longer in his palace, but to send an order for his departure, with his whole family, as soon as it could be done without prejudice or inconvenience to the princess, and had commanded him to prepare a draught of a message for that purpose, which he then read.

The chancellor and his friends having expressed their concern, and delivered their opinion, that such a message should be avoided if possible, consistently with the king's honour; the minister replied, that such was the king's final resolution. It was then proposed, that a message should be sent to the prince, acquainting him with the kind of submission which was required of him, and the alterations in his conduct, which the king expected as the terms of the reconciliation. But the proposal was rejected by Sir Robert Walpole, as likely to beget mutual altercations, and produce a paper war between the king and his son, which would be attended with still more fatal consequences than taking it *short at first.**

The draught of the message was then examined. It was couched in very harsh and improper terms, and contained indecorous reflec-

* Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

tions, inconsistent with the dignity of the crown, and the station of the disputants. A paragraph towards the conclusion, expressed a severe reproach on *persons in general* resorting to the prince, who did not pay their court to the king, but opposed his measures, called them a FACTION, with other strong and harsh words. To all these, the chancellor objected, as a style improper between princes, and indecent from the king to his son. He thought, if a message of this nature must go, it should be strong, but full of decorum. Sir Robert Walpole declared his opinion, that as the prince had plainly set himself at the head of the opposition, it was right to carry the war into the enemy's country; and as they attacked the king through the sides of his ministers, to return it by falling on the prince's advisers. To this the chancellor replied, as to such advisers as fomented this fatal division in the royal family, the harshest words which language could furnish were not too much; but his objection was, that, as the draught then stood, it comprised more, and might extend to all that came to the prince, who happened to differ from the king's ministers in parliament, and did not come to court. That this would include some persons of the first quality and estates in the kingdom, besides great numbers of others who were only misguided; and as it was probable this paper might one time or other be laid before the parliament, it might give rise to very disagreeable debates and questions there. The duke of Newcastle

and Mr. Pelham acceded to his opinion; whereupon most of those expressions and epithets were at length struck out, and that remarkable paragraph entirely changed and confined to the *advisers* of the prince, who *fomented the division in the royal family, and thereby weakened the common interest of the whole.*

On the 9th of September, this message was laid before the lords of the cabinet council who were not absent from London.*

Sir Robert Walpole acquainted them with the several causes of the king's displeasure against the prince. He said, for these reasons the king was of opinion that the families should be separated, and desired their advice on the method of doing it; he had, by the king's order and with his approbation, prepared the draught of a message to the prince, which he should now submit to their consideration. He at the same time intimated, that the king thought the style of the draught *full gentle* enough. He then read the letters which had passed between the prince on one hand, and the king and queen on the other; and directed them to observe the difference between the narrative of the fact, contained in the first letter to the king, and the accounts

* Present. Archbishop of Canterbury (Potter)—Lord Chancellor—Lord Godolphin (lord privy seal)—Duke of Grafton (lord chamberlain)—Duke of Richmond (master of the horse)—Duke of Newcastle—Earl of Pembroke (groom of the stole)—Earl of Ilay—Lord Harrington—Sir Robert Walpole—Sir Charles Wager.

Absent. Lord President (in Sussex)—Earl of Scarbro' (in Yorkshire, and not sufficiently recovered to attend business)—Duke of Devonshire (in Ireland)—Duke of Dorset (at Namur)—Duke of Argyle (in Oxfordshire.)

which he gave to the queen, as well as to lord Harrington and himself, the morning after the labour, which last he read from some minutes, which lord Harrington had approved. He observed, with great emphasis, that these letters were specious empty words, without any assurances of alteration of conduct, and laid great stress on the variations between the letters to the king, and those to the queen, and particularly requested them to remark, that in the letter to the queen, the words, *your majesty*, were never used, but only *madame* and *vous*. He then read the draught of the message.

The lords sufficiently testified their concern, by their looks and expressions. They understood this to be a communication of the king's determined resolution, which was not to be changed. They agreed that he was undoubtedly master in his own family, and as he had been highly offended, he was to judge whether he would forgive or resent. They considered that their advice was only required as to the *method*, not the *measure*, and therefore proceeded to take the draught into consideration. A few exceptions were made to the terms. Two were made by the lord chancellor, the first to the words, *I cannot suffer myself to be imposed upon by them*, as too harsh, and not adequate to the dignity of the personages concerned, he proposed to insert, *I cannot consistently with my own honour and authority, suffer them to have any weight with me.* But this alteration was not adopted. The second objection was to the word *rendezvous*, as

too low and coarse; and as all the lords concurred in the same opinion, it was omitted, and the word *resort* suffered to stand alone. In the place of, *you shall not reside in my palace*, inserted at the proposal of the archbishop, lord Godolphin offered, *I think it not fit that you should reside in my palace;* an alteration which was approved by the chancellor, as expressive of the king's opinion, and properly introductive of the subsequent command to leave St. James's. This was rejected on the observation of Sir Robert Walpole, that those words could not be considered as sufficiently strong.

After making a few other verbal alterations of little consequence, the message was agreed to, and submitted to the final approbation of the king.*

The manner of sending it to the prince was proposed to be by a message signed by the king at the top, with his name at length, and with the two first letters at the bottom, after the form of instructions; and that an order, signed by his majesty, should be delivered to the persons who should be charged with carrying it, reciting the message in the very words, and commanding them to read it to, and leave it with his royal highness. It was also agreed, that copies of this message should be privately delivered to the several foreign ministers in England, and other copies sent to the king's ministers residing abroad, as a *species facti*, or narrative of the king's reasons for this proceeding with his son.

Other particulars were mentioned, and it

* Narrative.

seemed to be the general sense of the lords that they should be regulated in like manner as upon the *separation* in the late reign; but it was thought proper to leave them to the personal direction of the king himself, without offering any particular advice thereupon. On Saturday, September 10th, this message, signed as before mentioned, was sent to the prince, by the duke of Grafton, Duke of Richmond, and earl of Pembroke, who had a signed order, as above described, for their justification.

"The professions you have lately made in your letters, of your particular regard to me, are so contradictory to all your actions, that I cannot suffer myself to be imposed upon by them. You know very well, you did not give the least intimation to me, or to the queen, that the princess was with child, or breeding, until within less than a month of the birth of the young princess. You removed the princess twice in the week immediately preceding the day of her delivery, from the place of my residence, in expectation, as you have voluntarily declared, of her labour; and both times upon your return, you industriously concealed from the knowledge of me and the queen, every circumstance relating to this important affair: and you at last, without giving any notice to me, or to the queen, precipitately, hurried the princess from Hampton Court, in a condition not to be named. After having thus, in execution of your own determined measures, exposed both the princess and her child to the greatest perils, you now plead

surprise and tenderness for the princess, as the only motives that occasioned these repeated indignities offered to me, and to the queen your mother.

"This extravagant and undutiful behaviour, in so essential a point as the birth of an heir to my crown, is such an evidence of your premeditated defiance of me, and such a contempt of my authority, and of the natural right belonging to your parents, as cannot be excused by the pretended innocence of your intentions, nor palliated or disguised by specious words only.

"But the whole tenor of your conduct, for a considerable time, has been so entirely void of all real duty to me, that I have long had reason to be highly offended with you.

"And until you withdraw your regard and confidence from those by whose advice you are directed, and encouraged in your unwarrantable behaviour to me and to the queen, and until you return to your duty, you shall not reside in my palace, which I will not suffer to be made the resort of them, who, under the appearance of an attachment to you, foment the division which you have made in my family, and thereby weaken the common interest of the whole. In this situation I will receive no reply; but when your actions manifest a just sense of your duty and submission, *that* may induce me to pardon, what at present I most justly resent.

"In the mean time, it is my pleasure that you leave St. James's, with all your family, when it can be done without prejudice or inconve-

nience to the princess. I shall for the present leave to the princess the care of my grand-daughter, until a proper time calls upon me to consider of her education."

All farther application from the prince being ineffectual, he retired from the palace, to Norfolk House, in St. James's Square, where he took up his residence, and his house became the centre of political opposition. The king accordingly issued an order, on the 27th of February, 1738, forbidding all persons who paid their court to the prince and princess of Wales, from being admitted into his presence at any of the royal palaces.

All the correspondence which passed between the king, queen, and the prince, on this unfortunate occasion, was published, by authority of the court, and distributed to each of the foreign ministers in England, as well as to the British embassadors abroad.

As the message delivered on the 10th of September, contained many reflections on the prince which no man of honour could forgive,* the measure tended still farther to irritate him and to supply an excuse for his resentment to the king, and his detestation of the minister, who incurred the principal blame in this whole transaction, and was accused of fomenting the misunderstanding, to serve his own sinister purposes. The prince gave credit to these imputations. Walpole was held out as the man who having so often, nay, so constantly sacrificed the national

* Opinions of the duchess of Marlborough.

interest to his avarice, his ambition, and his fears, had now sacrificed to his passions, the peace of his master's family, and taken that opportunity to make him declare a proscription to all those who opposed the minister.*

In reviewing the conduct of Walpole in this delicate transaction, he cannot be wholly exempted from blame; nor is it easy to ascertain in what degree he was culpable. He had, on former occasions, earnestly laboured to reconcile the father and son, and had infused into the king a spirit of moderation and forbearance. This case was attended with peculiar difficulties, which can never be fully appreciated. Lord Chancellor Hardwicke himself says, "Sir Robert "Walpole informed me of certain passages "between the king and himself, and between "the queen and the prince, of too high and "secret a nature, even to be trusted to this "narrative; but from thence, I found great "reason to think that this unhappy difference "between the king and queen, and his royal "highness, turned upon some points of a more "interesting and important nature, than have "hitherto appeared."†

It is however justly remarked by the same candid observer, that those who attempted to reconcile the breach, were not listened to on either side. On the part of the prince, those who wanted to set him at their head, against his father's measures, seemed to have it in view to

* Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham. Correspondence.

† Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

write such letters to the king as might read well when published to the world, be taken for a submission, and at the same time effectually prevent that from being accepted, by provoking the queen, and thereby cut off the chance of mediation, and shut the only door through which any reconciliation could enter. On the other side, Sir Robert Walpole seemed to think, that they had now an advantage over the prince which ought not to be parted with, and it would be better for the administration to have a total and declared separation, than that things should remain in the precarious state in which they then stood.*

The conduct of the prince may however be deemed highly imprudent and disrespectful. Even lord Bolingbroke, with all his antipathy to Walpole, deemed it reprehensible.

"Though," he observes to Sir William Wyndham, "I am informed very irregularly and very imperfectly of what passes in the island of Great Britain, yet by what I have heard, it seemed plain to me, that an entire rupture between the father and the son has been long unavoidable; I have therefore waited to see what the immediate occasion or pretence of this rupture would be; for I always believed the counsellors of his Royal Highness would think it of great importance to render this not only plausible, but popular.

"I thought that such an occasion or pretence might have been founded on the proceedings of

* Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

last winter, but I saw things at a distance; and they who saw them nearer, judged otherwise. The settlement on the princess was not then made; this and other reasons might concur to make them judge and act as they did at that time. But I am at a loss to find the plausibility or the popularity of the present occasion of rupture. He hurries his wife from court when she is on the point of being delivered of her first child. His father smiles, struts, and storms. He confesses his rashness, and asks pardon in terms of one who owns himself in the wrong. Besides, that all this appears to me boyish, it is purely domestic; and there is nothing, as far as I can discern, to interest the public in the cause of his Royal Highness. But, notwithstanding, this extreme severity on the other side, and the prejudices of mankind against those who exercise this severity, may have perhaps that effect. I think truly they will have it, if the prince shows on this occasion firmness in his character, and decency in his behaviour; one without any mixture of humour, or air of obstinacy; the other without any thing low, or if I may say so, unprincely. The resolution he has taken to pay his debts, and to live like a man of quality who has a good estate, deserves great commendation; there is honour, sense, and dignity in it. He may build on this foundation, great reputation; and great reputation is great power, especially in one of his rank. If it was not so, my friend, it would scarcely be worth our esteem, since

popular fame is strictly and truly, what a man, weak enough to be fond of it, even for its own sake, called it, *fama consensu stultorum, improbrumque excitata.*

"As little as I concern myself at present, and shall do the rest of my life in these affairs, I could not help saying thus much, in answer to the account you give me of what passed whilst you was at London; and all I shall add is this: It gave you inwardly, I suppose, much the same emotion as a scene of Tom Thumb would have done. But you are too wise not to know, that they who are on the stage must keep the countenance their parts require, in a tragi-comical farce, while they who are in the pit may laugh their fill. '*Nous mourrions de rire, si nous ne mourions pas de faim,*' was the burthen of a French song, during the great distress of this country in the last war that Louis the fourteenth waged."*

In the course of this unfortunate transaction, the prince gave signs of high spirit and extreme sensibility; a striking instance of which is recorded by lord chancellor Hardwicke, which I shall relate in his own words.† "On the fourth of August, the day of proroguing the parliament, I went to St. James's in my way to Westminster, in order to inquire after the health of the princess of Wales, and the new-born princess. After I had performed that ceremony, I went away, and was overtaken at the further end of Pall-

* Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, October 13, 1737. Correspondence, vol. 3. p. 494.

† Lord Hardwicke's Narrative.

mall, by one of the prince's footmen, with a message that his royal highness desired to speak with me.

"Being returned, I was carried into the nursery, whither the prince came immediately out of the princess's bedchamber, and turned all the women out of the room. Having said many civil things, and made me sit down, he showed me a message which he had received the day before from the king, which he said, he presumed I, being one of the cabinet, must have seen before. Without staying for an answer, he made a long apology for his conduct, much to the effect of his first letter to the king, with this addition, that if the king, who was apt sometimes to be pretty quick, should have objected to her going to London, and an altercation should have arisen, what a condition would the poor princess have been in? He then said, he would read me two letters he had written, the one to the king, and the other to the queen. Whereupon I asked him whether they had been sent, for if they had not, I was determined in my own mind not to have seen or heard them read. He answered, they were sent the day before by my lord Jersey, and then read them. He asked me what I thought of them? at which I bowed, and said nothing. He went on, that upon those letters the king sent word he would not see him; but he did not think fit to let it rest there on his part, and had sent another letter by lord Carnarvon that morning, which he read, and asked me, if it was not very respectful; to this I answered,

very respectful; and indeed, it was a much more proper letter than the former.

"I then proceeded to tell his royal highness, that I had heard nothing of this unhappy affair, till my going to Hampton Court, on the Tuesday before, to congratulate the king and queen on the birth of their grand-daughter. That I then found their majesties highly offended with what had passed; and I should be unjust to his royal highness, if I concealed from him that, from the circumstances preceding and accompanying the carrying away the princess, they understood it to proceed from a deliberate intention to take that part without their privity. I added, that incidents of this nature gave the deepest concern and affliction to every one who wished well to the whole royal family, and to none more than myself. That every occasion of that kind ought to be removed; for that *union* in the royal family was most essential to the true interest and preservation of it. That the contrary gave the most formidable advantages to their enemies; whereas nothing could hurt any branch of it when united. That I hoped his royal highness would show such a submission and dutiful behaviour to the king his father in the present juncture, as would tend to bring about this union, and that I was sure it would be the zealous endeavour of the king's servants, and in particular of myself, to do every thing that might facilitate it.

"He answered, my lord, *I don't doubt you in the least, for I believe you to be a very honest man;*

and as I was rising up embraced me, offering to kiss me. I instantly kneeled down, and kissed his hand, whereupon he raised me up and kissed my cheek. The scene had something in it moving; and my heart was full of the melancholy prospect that I thought lay before me, which made me almost burst into tears. The prince observed this, and appeared moved himself, and said, *let us sit down, my lord, a little, and recollect ourselves, that we may not go out thus.* Soon after which, I took my leave, and went directly to the house of lords."

CHAPTER 49.

1737.

Illness—Fortitude—and Death of Queen Caroline—Virtues—Grief of the King—Affliction of Sir Robert Walpole.

I SHALL close the transactions of the year 1737, with the illness and death of queen Caroline, an event highly disastrous to the country, to the king, and to Sir Robert Walpole. This illustrious and amiable woman, had been for some time in a declining state of health. The disorder under which she had laboured, and which occasioned her death, was a rupture, which, from motives of delicacy, she had communicated only to the mistress of the robes, her favourite lady Sundon. She was even so imprudent as to conceal the cause of her indisposition from the medical men who were called in to her relief. This false delicacy, which was incompatible with her usual magnanimity, was the occasion of her death. For the medicines which were administered, and the methods taken, were diametrically opposite to those which would have been adopted, had her disorder been known. Judging from the symptoms, and from her own declarations, the physicians treated it as the gout in her stomach, and administered strong cordials,

which aggravated the malady. When the danger became so imminent as to render the concealment impossible, it was too late. She submitted in vain to the most painful operations, and the surgeon who performed them declared, that if he had been acquainted with her real situation two days sooner, her speedy recovery would have been the consequence.*

Although racked with extreme agony, almost without intermission, during twelve days and nights, she bore her sufferings not only with patience and resignation, but almost without a groan, maintaining, to the moment of her dissolution, serenity, temper, dignity, greatness of soul, and an unaffected submission to the ways of Providence. In all this melancholy scene, she behaved with such invariable courtesy to every one about her, that one of the physicians observed, he had never met with a similar instance in the whole course of his practice. She repeatedly expressed to her attendants, her grateful sense of their laborious watchings, and distinguished each of them with appropriate marks of regard.

She recommended her servants, in the most affecting and solemn manner, to the king's favour and protection; extended her concern to the lowest of them, and was equally warm in her solicitude for their welfare; recounting to him the faithfulness of their respective services.

This firmness and resignation were not the

* Letter from Charles Ford to Swift, November 22, 1737. Swift's Works.

effect of insensibility or stoical indifference, but derived from the strongest exertions of reason and religion. On the second day of her illness, she was observed to shed some tears, occasioned either by the lowness of her spirits, the anguish of her sufferings, or by tenderness for the despair of her family. She soon, however, recovered from this debility, and resumed her accustomed fortitude. Apprehensive that during a painful operation, she had so far forgotten herself as to use peevish expressions, she reproached herself with having shown an unbecoming impatience.

She frequently declared that she had made it the business of her life to discharge her religious and social duties. She hoped God would pardon her infirmities, and accept the sincerity of her endeavours, which were always intended to promote the king's honour, and the prosperity of the nation. She declared that she was a hearty well-wisher to the liberties of the people; and that if she had erred in any part of her public conduct, it arose from want of judgment, not from intention.

On the 20th of November, a little before she died, she said to the physician, "How long can this last?" and on his answering, "Your majesty will soon be eased of your pains;" she replied, "The sooner the better." She then repeated a prayer of her own composing, in which there was such a flow of natural eloquence, as demonstrated the vigour of a great and good mind. When her speech began to faulter, and she

seemed expiring, she desired to be raised up in her bed, and fearing that nature would not hold out long enough without artificial supports, she called to have water sprinkled on her, and a little after desired it might be repeated. She then, with the greatest composure and presence of mind, requested her weeping relations to "kneel down and pray for her." Whilst they were reading some prayers, she exclaimed, "pray aloud, that I may hear;" and after the Lord's prayer was concluded, in which she joined as well as she could, she said, "So," and waving her hand, lay down and expired.*

Having already discussed the character of the queen, I shall only add a few traits to the preceding sketch.† She was blessed with a natural serenity and calmness of mind, and often expressed her thankfulness to God, that he had given her a temper which was not easily ruffled, and which enabled her to support every difficulty. It was truly said of her, that the same softness of behaviour and command of herself, that appeared in the drawing room, went along with her into her private apartments, gladdened all about her person, accompanied her as well in the gay and cheerful seasons of life, as under the most trying circumstances, and did not fail her even in the hour of death itself.

One part of her conduct which reflects the

* The principal circumstances of her death, are extracted from Dr. Alured Clark's Essay towards the Character of Queen Caroline.

† Chapter 31.

highest honour on her memory was, her maternal attention to her children, and particularly to her daughters. She superintended their education, directed their behaviour, formed their manners, and tempered her reproofs with a mixture of proper severity and kindness, which rendered her equally beloved and respected.

The enemies of queen Caroline, have represented her as being of an unforgiving temper, and even reproached her with a want of maternal affection. It was maliciously suggested, that she fomented the misunderstanding between the king and the prince of Wales; but on the contrary, she exerted her utmost influence to abate the petulance of the son, and the irritability of the father. Once in particular, when an action of the prince had been represented to the king with malicious aggravation, the queen defended her son, and good naturedly observed, "Ce n'est qu'une indiscretion de page:" 'Tis nothing but a youthful frolic.* The tongue of slander has even reproached her with maintaining her implacability to the hour of death, and refusing her pardon to the prince, who had humbly requested to receive her blessing. To this imputation, Chesterfield alludes in a copy of verses, circulated at the time:

"And unforgiving, unforgiven dies."

Pope also has consigned to posterity this aspersion, in terms of malignant irony:

* From lord Orford.

"Or teach the melancholy muse to mourn,
Hang the sad verse on CAROLINA'S urn,
And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All parts perform'd, and ALL *her children blest.*"*

I am happy to have it in my power to remove this stigma from the memory of this great princess. She sent her blessing and a message of forgiveness to her son, and told Sir Robert Walpole, that she would have seen him with pleasure; but prudence forbad the interview, as it might embarrass and irritate the king.†

"Her charities were limited only by her revenue; though she avoided all appearance of ostentation so much, that many persons who subsisted by her bounty, were wholly ignorant of their benefactress; and she was so liberal that her public and private lists, with the occasional sums expended on the same account,

* See Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue 1, l. 79. The satirist, with a duplicity not unusual to him, has affected in a note to repair the insult offered to her memory, by observing, that her last moments manifested the utmost courage and resolution. It is, however, justly observed by Dr. Warton, on this passage, that, "no subtle commentary can torture these words to mean any thing but the most poignant sarcasm on the behaviour of this great personage to her son on her death-bed:" and adds, that "about the same time, Pope wrote a couplet on the same subject:"

"Here lies, wrapt up in forty thousand towels,
The only proof that Caroline had bowels."

The evidence that Pope was the author of this infamous quibble, which is generally attributed to Chesterfield, is not given by Dr. Warton. Lord Mansfield had it from Pope himself, told it to lord Orford, from whom I received it, with a variation of "seven-and-twenty," instead of "forty thousand towels."

† From lord Orford.

amounted to near a *fifth* part of her whole income."*

Her disposition was so humane and benevolent, that the unfortunate in all situations and religions were secure of her protection. She paid a particular attention to those Roman Catholics, whose zeal in favour of the Pretender had espoused them to the rigour of the laws. Several Popish and Jacobite ladies, particularly the duchess of Norfolk, were admitted to private conferences. Their representations procured liberal supplies of money, to many of the most indigent. In some instances, she even carried her protection to an impolitic extreme, and in a manner which distressed Sir Robert Walpole. Archibald earl of Ilay, who principally managed the affairs of Scotland, having been reproached for permitting so large a number of Jacobite meeting-houses in Edinburgh, and in other parts of the kingdom, in open defiance of the laws; acknowledged the fact, and exculpated himself, by declaring that he had laid a scheme for suppressing them before the minister, who discouraged his attempt, by observing, their friends had a ready access to the queen by the back stairs, and all his efforts would be defeated.†

A conspicuous part in the character of queen Caroline was, her great patronage of learned men. The protection she afforded to the first luminaries of the church has been slightly mentioned. She distinguished Clarke, Hoadly,

* Character of Queen Caroline, p. 12.

† Etough, imparted by Archibald duke of Argyle.

Butler, Sherlock, Secker, and Pearce, with peculiar marks of regard. The gracious manner in which she listened to recommendations of literary eminence, is well displayed in an anecdote relating to the celebrated author of "The Analogy, between Natural and Revealed Religion." Secker,* while he was king's chaplain, mentioned, in conversation with the queen, Butler, who was then rector of Stanhope. The queen said, she thought he was dead, and making inquiries of archbishop Blackburne, if he was not dead, his answer was, "no, madam, but he is buried." Soon afterwards, without solicitation, she appointed him clerk of her closet, and he used to attend her every day, from seven to nine, in the afternoon. She also caused his name to be inserted on the list for a vacant bishopric.

Obscurity, disgrace, and banishment, were no obstacles to her bounty and protection. She conferred benefactions on Stephen Duck, who, from a common labourer, had raised himself into notice as a poet. She obtained the pardon of Savage, who was condemned to death for having committed a murder in a drunken fray, in spite of the opposition of his unnatural mother, and supported him with an annual pension.† She

* Life of Secker.

† "When Savage was disappointed in his application for the place of poet laureat, which was given to Colley Cibber, he applied, in the bitterness of distress, boldly to the queen, that having once given him life, she would enable him to support it; and therefore published a short poem on her birth-day, to which he annexed the odd title of volunteer-laureat. Not having a friend at court who would get him introduced, or present him, he published the poem,

showed her esteem for the memory of Milton, by conferring a present on his grand-daughter. She obtained the recall of lord Lansdowne, and of Carte, the nonjuring historian, who had both been obliged to abscond for disloyal principles.*

which was not ill calculated to strike the queen. The queen sent for the verses, and in a few days after the publication, Savage received a bank bill of fifty pounds, and a gracious message by lord North and Grey: That her majesty was highly pleased with the verses, that she took particularly kind his lines relating to the king; that he had permission to write annually on the same subject; and that he should yearly receive the like present, till something better (which was her majesty's intention) could be done for him. After this, he was permitted to present one of his annual poems to the queen, had the honour of kissing her hand, and met with the most gracious reception." Johnson's Life of Savage.

From these now-forgotten poems, may I be permitted to quote one passage which alludes to the beneficial consequences of the pacific system, planned by Sir Robert Walpole, and supported by queen Caroline.

"Here cease my plaint—See yon enlivening scenes!
Child of the spring! Behold the best of queens!
Softness and beauty rose this heavenly morn,
Dawn'd wisdom, and benevolence was born.
Joy o'er a people, in her influence rose;
Like that which spring o'er rural nature throws.
War to the peaceful pipe resigns his roar,
And breaks his billows on some distant shore.
Domestic discord sinks beneath her smile,
And arts, and trade, and plenty glad the isle.
Lo! Industry surveys, with feasted eyes,
His due reward, a plenteous harvest rise!
Nor (taught by Commerce) joys in that alone,
But sees the harvest of a world his own.
Hence thy just praise, thou mild, majestic Thames!
Rich river, richer than Pactolus' streams!

* Biographia Britannica.

Words cannot sufficiently express the sensibility and affection of George the Second during her illness, and his regret for her loss. He watched by her bed-side with unabated attention, and could scarcely be prevailed on to take any rest, till she expired.

As soon as the first emotions of grief had subsided, he loved to talk of his departed queen, recounted her virtues, and considered how she would have acted on occasions of difficulty. He continued the salaries of all the officers and nominal servants, who were not taken into his own household, and commanded a list of her numerous benefactions to be laid before him; saying it was his intention, that nobody should be a sufferer besides himself.*

On her death-bed, the queen testified her approbation of Sir Robert Walpole's measures, and the high opinion she entertained of his capacity and rectitude. Turning to the minister, who with the king was standing by her bed-side, she said to him, "I hope you will never desert the king, but continue to serve him with your usual fidelity;" and pointing to

Than those renown'd of yore, by poets roll'd
O'er intermingled pearls, and sands of gold.
How glorious thou, when from old Ocean's urn,
Loaded with India's wealth, thy waves return!
Alive thy banks! along each bordering line,
High cultur'd blooms, inviting villas shine;
And while around ten thousand beauties glow,
These still o'er those redoubling lustre throw."

* Character of Queen Caroline, p. 41.

the king, she added, "I recommend his majesty to you." The king said nothing, and the minister was alarmed, lest this mode of making him of more consequence than the king, might awaken jealousy, and be the cause of his disgrace.* But these apprehensions were unfounded.

The king was so affected with the queen's death, that for a long time after that melancholy event, he could not see Sir Robert Walpole without bursting into tears. About a fortnight afterwards, the king showed him an intercepted letter, in which it was observed, that as the queen was dead, the minister would lose his sole protector. "It is false," said he, good naturedly, "you remember that on her death-bed the queen recommended *me* to you."

Horace Walpole has recorded a striking instance of the king's violent grief for the death of his queen, and affection to her memory, which I will relate in his own words. "Mr. Walpole can never be able to forget a melancholy epoch, when, about ten days after his arrival from Holland, upon the queen's death, his majesty found him with the princesses, in their apartment, and their royal highnesses immediately retiring, the king, with a flood of tears gushing from his eyes, which drew an equal torrent from those of his faithful subject, then present, with agonies and sobs, gave a confidential detail to Mr. Walpole, of the inimitable virtues of his royal consort,

* From lord Orford.

that was now no more; and particularly with respect to the great relief and assistance which he found in her noble and calm disposition and sentiments, in governing such an humoursome and inconstant people; that her presence of mind often supported him in trying times, and the sweetness of her temper and prudence would moderate and assuage his own vivacity and resentment; that incidents of state of a rough, difficult, and disagreeable nature, would by her previous conferences and concert with that able minister, Sir Robert Walpole, be made smooth, easy, and palatable to him, but that he must now lead a helpless, disconsolate, and uncomfortable life, during the remainder of a troublesome reign, that he did not know what to do, nor which way to turn himself. But then recovering himself a little, he said, "as she never forgot her love and concern for me to the last moment of her days, she earnestly recommended it to me on her death-bed (and his majesty emphatically added, that it was a just and wise recommendation) to follow the advice of Sir Robert Walpole, and never to part with so faithful and able a minister; this (said the king) is now my only resource, upon this I must entirely depend."*

Some time after the queen's death, before his hour of rising, George said to baron Brinkman, one of his German attendants, "I hear you have a picture of my wife, which she gave you, and which is a better likeness than any in my

* Horace Walpole's Apology. Walpole Papers.

possession; bring it to me." When it was brought, the king seemed greatly affected, and after a short pause, he said, "It is very like, put it upon the chair at the foot of my bed, and leave it till I ring the bell." At the end of two hours he rang the bell, and when the baron entered, the king said, "Take this picture away, I never yet saw the woman worthy to buckle her shoe."*

Walpole was no less affected than the king. He deeply felt the severe loss of his patroness in the closet; he appreciated the difficulty of guiding the king, when her interposition was no more, and anticipated the embarrassments he was about to encounter from the jealousies of a discordant cabinet. Impressed with these sentiments, he closed a letter to Horace Walpole, in which he speaks of the queen's death, "I must have done, our grief and distraction wants no relation, I am oppressed with sorrow and dread."†

Sir Robert always entertained a high respect for the memory of his royal patroness queen Caroline; and it was principally from deference to her recommendation, that some time after her death he obtained the deanery of Winchester for Dr. Pearce, and placed Butler upon the bench of bishops.

* Communicated by Theodore Henry Broadhead, esquire, grandson of Baron Brinkman, who possesses the portrait alluded to in the text.

† Correspondence.

I shall close this chapter with an elegy on the death of queen Caroline, composed by Mrs. Carter.*

When Heav'n's decrees a prince's fate ordain;
A kneeling people supplicate in vain.
Too well our tears this mournful truth express,
And in a queen's a parent's loss confess.
A loss the general grief can best rehearse,
A theme superior to the pow'r of verse;
Though just our grief, be ev'ry murmur still,
Nor dare pronounce his dispensations ill;
In whose wise counsels and disposing hand,
The fates of monarchies and monarchs stand:
Who only knows the state of either fit,
And bids the erring sense of man submit.
Ye grateful Britons, to her memory just,
With pious tears imbalm her sacred dust;
Confess her grac'd with all that's good and great,
A public blessing to a favour'd state.
Patron of freedom, and her country's laws,
Sure friend to virtue's and religion's cause;
Religion's cause, whose charms superior shone
To ev'ry gay temptation of a crown.
Whose awful dictates all her soul possess'd,
Her one great aim to make a people blest.
Ye drooping muses mourn her hasty doom,
And spread your deathles honours round her tomb.
Her name to long succeeding ages raise,
Who both inspir'd and patroniz'd your lays.
Each gen'rous art sit pensive o'er her urn,
And ev'ry grace and ev'ry virtue mourn.
Attending angels bear your sacred prize,
Amidst the radiant glories of the skies;

* In my first edition, I ascribed these verses to Doddington, because they were found among the Melcombe Papers, but the learned biographer of Mrs. Carter, corrected my mistake by informing me that they were written by her.

Where godlike princes, who below pursu'd,
That noblest end of rule the public good,
Now sit secure, their gen'rous labour past,
With all the just rewards of virtue grac'd:
In that bright train distinguish'd let her move,
Who built her empire on a people's love.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX TO VOL. III.

CONTAINING

SELECT PARTS

OF THE

CORRESPONDENCE

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE FIRST EDITION.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

1730—1737.

[Orford Papers.]

Endorsed in Horace Walpole's hand-writing, Thoughts on the present state of affairs, *in Sir Robert Walpole's of August* 21, 1735.—*This and the following Paper appear to have been drawn up by Sir Robert Walpole, as the dates and some corrections are in his hand-writing.*

August 15—26, 1735.

BY the last letters from Vienna it appears that Mr. Robinson had sounded the several ministers of the court of Vienna, in regard both to the proposition of a separate negociation between the emperour and France, by the exchange of Loraine and Tuscany, &c. and with regard to a separate negotiation between the emperour and Spain, upon the foot of a marriage between don Carlos and the second archduchess. And by his report it appears that the first scheme was relish'd much the most of the two, tho' attended with difficulties and objections, which, if not remov'd, will render the whole ineffectual; and that the second was either wholly rejected, or received with silence and without an answer.

But as Mr. Robinson's conversations were grounded upon his own motion, and without any authority, they were received as such: and the Imperial ministers declin'd entering upon either, until he was authorized to speak. But the conclusion of all the conferences turned almost upon this single point, whether his majesty wou'd positively promise and engage from

this time to succour the emperor; at all events, in case the emperor should be induc'd to enter into any or either of the schemes, and they should prove unsuccessfull, and this attended with strong declarations that, without such an assurance, the emperour wou'd take care of himself exclusively of the maritime powers; and it must be observed that there is great reason to believe that some secret overtures have passed between the courts of France and Vienna, with secret instructions for that purpose.

It will be unnecessary for his majesty immediately to determine what orders shall be given on this demand of the Imperial court; for, as Mr. Robinson has since received his majesty's orders to speak directly to the emperor upon both of the two propositions, it will be proper to wait for the answer that shall be given to either or both of them, now proposed in form, before his majesty needs speak to the general demand, which has not yet been made to him in form; but it is before his majesty, as the conclusion which Mr. Robinson draws from the several conferences which he has held with the ministers of the emperour.

And when this question comes to be considered, it will be necessary that the true state of the case between the king and the emperour shall be previously explained, for all the reasoning of the Imperial ministers is founded upon a supposition that all the schemes that are suggested by his majesty to extricate the emperour out of his present and very pressing distresses, tended equally or more to the immediate service and benefit of his majesty than of the emperour, and in consequence that the emperour's entering into them would be such an obligation upon his majesty, as demanded, in return, an assurance from the king that he would engage in the war at all events, upon the failure of success in any attempt that should be made to procure a separate or general pacification. His majesty is to be considered as the best and nearest ally the emperour has, engag'd

by interest, inclination, and defensive alliances to support the emperour as far as it is possible and practicable, and consequentially deeply concerned in the events of the present war. His majesty, in conjunction with the States Generall, has been labouring to find out all probable means of putting an end to the present troubles; and his majesty's regard to the emperour, in all his proceedings, has been so great, that it has render'd him so far suspected by all the allies, that his partiality to the emperour is the chief obstruction in all the other courts, that has made his majesty less able to serve the emperour by his good offices.

At the present conjuncture, the plan of pacification being laid aside, to which the emperour himself is daily making infinite objections, intimations have been given to his majesty from the courts of France and of Spain, pointing at a separate negociation to be carried on by the means of his majesty with the Imperial court; his majesty, by his minister at Vienna, communicates, in the utmost confidence, these intimations to the emperour, lays them before him in the most friendly manner, for his consideration, and even option, as to which shall be first proceeded upon, suggests them as what carried a greater appearance and probability of success than any other method that does at present appear, and offers to the emperour his assistance to endeavour to bring that about that shall be most agreeable to his Imperial majesty; for the absolute success he does not, cannot answer. What pretence then can there be for the emperour, upon the failure of success, to demand of his majesty any new engagements or assurances for his majesty to take a part which he has frankly declared to the emperour, in the present situation of affairs with regard to the Dutch, he is not in a condition at present to give the emperour any reason to hope for?

The inference from all this is, that the emperour shon'd be convinc'd how unjust and unreasonable it is

to reject any method that shall be offer'd of serving himself, unless the king will make such positive declarations as the present circumstances will not permit; and what a greater injustice it will still be, for the emperour to endeavour to make his own peace, at the expense of his best friends because they cannot immediately do all that he wishes, although they have demonstrated to all the world that they are desirous of doing all they can. But there is one point suggested in Mr. Robinson's private letter which deserves the greatest consideration, I mean the intimation of his majesty's advancing to the emperour a summ of money, that might enable him this campaign to make use of his numerous armies in such manner as shou'd be thought most advisable. I mention not what is called the electoral loan, which is none of our business.

This money to be advanced by Great Britain must either be in a publick, or a private manner. If to be avowedly given to the emperour, I am afraid it wou'd be the same thing, or it wou'd always be in the power of France to understand it so, as declaring war against France, and in the consequences wou'd differ in nothing but doing the same thing in the method least effectual and least serviceable.

If then it is to be done privately, and the summ is not inconsiderable, it wou'd be very dangerous to issue a summ of money out of the supplies of the year, without a power given by what is called a vote of credit, and to come to parliament to have it made good, without explaining or declaring the uses and services to which the money was applied; and I am afraid the difficulties upon this head will, upon due consideration, appear to the most willing mind unsurmountable.

August 21st, 1735.—The last resolution of the States Generall, received by the last mail from Holland, deserves the greatest attention and consideration; and as I cannot but be of opinion, that Mr. Walpole in the conference, when that resolution was delivered to

him, behaved in a manner that truly deserves the fullest approbation, I presume he will be ordered, in proper time, to let the States know, that his majesty looks upon their conduct upon this late occasion, in the same light as has been represented to them by his ambassador.

But as a sudden and hasty concurrence with the Dutch, in such a step, may too much encourage the promoters of this proceeding, who discover so great a tendency and biass to the measures and counsells of France, and as there is a good foundation to doubt of the measure itself, it was thought proper not to be precipitate in advising the immediate concurrence, altho' upon mature deliberation it may be found advisable not wholly to reject the proposition, if the mischiefs and inconveniencies shall be found greater that shall follow from such a resolution.

It is therefore to be considered what might be the consequences, if his majesty should happen to joyn with the Dutch in promoting a congress; or, if his majesty should be induced to proceed upon that footing, in what manner and how far it might be adviseable to go.

It must be admitted that the resolution of the States Generall is a very weak and imperfect piece, and all the pretences that are alledged to support the measure are at best but forced constructions, and the reasonings of a willing mind, determined to put such a sense and meaning upon the past transactions, as may in some manner justifie what they seemed otherwise resolved to do.

If therefore it shall be thought reasonable to concurr with the Dutch in the measure of a congress, it will not be at all necessary to joyn with them in their reasonings and allegations, any farther than they shall be thought proper. But his majesty may, in compliance with the Dutch, and rather than separate from them at this critical conjuncture, at their instance consent to a

congress, if it shall be understood or taken for granted, that the allies desire their answer may be taken in that sense, and that the explanations given by monsieur Fenelon, in Holland, and the explanation given by the cardinal to lord Waldegrave (whose words were taken down in writing in his presence, are likewise to be taken as such a declaration from France, as removes the objections to the generality of the answer of the allies; and in short, if the establishing a congress shall be consented to at the desire of the allies and of the Dutch, it may make the difficulty, in his majesty's refusing to concurr, the greater. And what favours the opinion of his majesty's complying, rather than rejecting this offer of a congress is, the consequences that are immediately to be apprehended upon any apparent disunion or difference between his majesty and the States Generall.

From that time the cardinal's apprehensions of a general war will vanish; and whatever influence and effect the union between the two maritime powers have had upon the counsells of France, they will there cease; for if the Dutch should persevere in this opinion, and his majesty should differ from them, nobody can tell how far they may then think it necessary to seek for their own immediate safety, by having recourse to a stricter alliance with France; and how hopeless soever any expectation of making the Dutch act or speak with vigour may have hitherto been, yet our endeavours have hitherto had so much effect, that they have constantly alarmed France, and all the favourable indications in the court of France, that have been seen from time to time, are truly to be imputed to no other cause. But upon such a disunion as may now happen, we must lay aside all thoughts even of a possibility of our making the Dutch at any time subservient to such views as may offer, of entering into the war, or of procuring either a generall or separate accommodation by the joint intervention of the maritime powers.

The union between the maritime powers has certainly given France the greatest uneasiness, and the court of France has often and in many shapes attempted to disunite them, but without effect: it seems not advisable for us to do that rashly for them, which they have not been able to do themselves.

It must be admitted that the intelligencies from all quarters demonstrate the distrusts, jealousies, and uneasinesses, that subsist among the allies themselves: and as it is as little to be doubted but they begin to be so sensible of the weight and burthen of the war, that they are all looking out for peace, if it can be procured upon their own terms, without regard to one another, such a situation must in all probability open new scenes, that may turn to the favour and advantage of the emperor; and upon such an incident, if the harmony between the maritime powers is kept up, the weight of the Dutch must be thrown into the scale of the emperour, which otherwise may incline him to the other side.

These sorts of reasonings seem to make it advisable not to differ with the Dutch upon this point, if they insist; but as this resolution of the States goes no farther than to be communicated to his majesty for his concurrence, without which they declare they will do nothing, if it be thought necessary, Mr. Walpole may be ordered to expostulate with them, to see if they can be prevailed upon to desist or recede in part, or in the whole, with proper instructions to him to modifie his majesty's concurrence, if it is at last to be given, in such a manner as may remove the objections that arise from the form of the resolution, such as may be distastefull to the emperour, or such as may not be proper for his majesty to concurr in.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

This correspondence to be secret—Desires him to settle with Chauvelin the specific gratification he is to receive.

(Secret.)

MY LORD; December 4—15, 1735.

THE letter* that accompanies this was wrote, as your lordship desired, to be shown to our friend; what is further necessary to be explained is, that he will exert in bringing things forward to a conclusion, which can never be done till all the parts are fully explained. We know nothing how far the two courts have proceeded and are agreed upon the articles of the treaty; no mention is made of the time or manner of execution, and by whom the several parts are to be executed. Chavigny was particularly carefull to distinguish between the preliminaries being signed, or being *convenu & arrêté*. He seemed to me to discover a backwardness in the whole, as far as he could without reproach. The communication in Holland is still called secrett and confidential, which so embarrasses the Dutch from their forms of government. If all this be a management for Spain till they shall hear the result of their last communication, when that answer is come, it will be necessary to remove these difficulties, that we may be able to hasten to a conclusion.

What I mention of this correspondence being seen by the king alone, is by his special order that you will be pleased to make no mention of your correspondence

* The next letter

with me in any of your other letters. If this proceeds, and comes to any thing beneficial to *our friend*, it is but just that nobody should know it, but when it is absolutely necessary; and, upon this head, I must desire your advice when and in what manner that part is to be farther opened. It is certainly most to be wished that the consideration should be annual, but most probable that a sum down will be expected; whether that is to be a voluntary present from the king, or a sum to be agreed upon, you must judge. It looks at present as if it was intended that the service should precede the reward. *The quantum* is a very material article, but something far short of what was once mentioned may reasonably suffice. Pray turn your thoughts to these several particulars, and lett me know your opinion by the first occasion.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Secret correspondence with Chauvelin—Known only to the king—Promises inviolable secrecy—Requests information.

(Secret.)

MY LORD; London, December 4—15, 1735.

I HAD sooner acknowledged the honour of your lordship's letter of the 1st instant, N. S. but I was in the country when it came to my hands; and upon my arrival in town, I learnt monsieur Chavigny was hourly expected in town to communicate to his majesty the plan of pacification, as now agreed between the courts of Vienna and Paris, which I thought might enable me to write more fully upon the present posture of affairs. Monsieur Chavigny arrived in London on Tuesday,

and yesterday had his audience of his majesty, and a conference with his servants; an account of which your lordship will receive at large from the duke of Newcastle.

I must now begin with making my acknowledgements for all the undeserved compliments which *our friend* was pleased to bestow upon me. Your lordship may, with great sincerity, assure him, that my honour and esteem for him is equall to any favourable thoughts he is pleased to entertain of me; and whatever good opinion he may have conceived of me, I will never forfeit it by my conduct and behaviour towards him; that I am very desirous to improve this correspondence into an intimate friendship; and if perfect sincerity, and a just sense of the value and consequence of his friendship, will encourage him to meritt his majestie's regard, I will be answerable to him that he shall have no cause to repent of any confidence that he shall place in me. It is needlesse to expresse my assurances of the utmost secrecy which the nature of this correspondence and honour commands, and which I am incapable of betraying.

And here it is necessary to acquaint your lordship, that your last letter was seen by no person living but the king and myself; that the contents of it are unknown to every other person, as what I now write is in like manner: and as, in the farther progress of this correspondence, I shall have occasion to inform *our friend* of what may be agreeable and desired here, I desire it may be from henceforward understood, that whatever I propose is in the name of the king and by his authority, altho', the better to disguise the correspondence, I shall no more make use of that name.

As to the grand affair now upon the tapis, I make no doubt but we all agree in our desires to bring it to a speedy and happy conclusion. Delays are always dangerous; and our friend may be assured if, in the publick transactions between the two courts, there ap-

pear any marks of caution, they are occasioned only by the method which the courts of Germany and France have put this into, and not out of any coolness or indifference for the success of this great event.

In your letter to me you represent the preliminaries as signed at Vienna, and orders sent for the ratification. Monsieur Chavigny, in his communication, confines it expressly to their being *convenu & arrêté*, and desires only a verbal approbation of them until the treaty shall be made; but was uninstructed about the terms and conditions of the treaty, or the method of execution; which made it impossible for us to go any farther than the declaration that was made, untill the whole shall be explained.

I can see no use in continuing to make these communications secrett and confidential and with reserves; what is known not only in substance, but even to particulars, in every corner of Europe, creates difficulties with the Dutch, from the manner of communication. If our friend will procure, that the whole shall be laid before us, all the articles of the treaty that is to be made, and the manner of the execution, we shall have the whole at once before us, and in a condition finally to determine. But whatever is to be transacted in form, must still passe by your lordship by the offices. This secrett correspondence between *our friend* and me, may be for our mutual information, and contribute towards the forwarding what shall be for the interest of both nations.

My brother in Holland is apprehensive, from Monsieur Fenelon's discourses, that he will make difficulties about the *pêle mêle;* as he has declared he will, without positive orders from his court It would be very unfortunate if any trouble should arise, at this important conjuncture, about such a piece of ceremony. I hope *our friend* will, by proper orders, immediately prevent any such disagreeable incident, which will scarcely be supposed to be accidental.

1736.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Probable motives for Chauvelin's conduct in requesting their support—Difficulty in deciding whether it is most prudent to support Chauvelin, who had always counteracted the views of England.

(Secret.)

London, December 24—January 4, 1735-6.

MY LORD;

I SEND your lordship herewith a letter of compliments, as you desired. It was necessary to take in both the great men; and if fine words will do any good, nothing is so cheap.

I confesse the situation you see our friend in makes our proceeding with him a matter worthy consideration. If all that he wants is our support, to help him to stand his ground, we should make but a sad figure to have contributed to the saving of a person, who we have had all the reason hitherto to believe the instrument of defeating all our views and designs. But I think he cannot stand very loose, if what we are to do for him would save him alone; and if he really thinks it may be of some service to him, our withdrawing our assistance just at the time that he wants and desires it, would at once undo all that we have been doing. That we may, therefore, have his assistance in carrying through the great work now upon the tapis, I think your lordship should go on with him, in a manner that

he may not suspect any change, coolness, or indifference on our parts. For if that should be the case, I fear, weak as he is, he would be strong enough, as long as he continues in office, to defeat all our expectations: and if the expectations he conceived from a correspondence with me have been an inducement to his going thus far, he will abate in his speed as he finds your lordship slackens your pace. I confesse it is a nice and critical case; but if we should loose him at last by our own conduct towards him, it would be a great misfortune. Your lordship's judgment and discretion upon the spot can alone direct you.

I come now to what you were pleased to say in relation to the late request that you made to his majesty, which I laid before him in the best manner I was able, and am to acquaint you that his majesty does not think at present of disposing of the vacant garter, but to defer it untill there are more vacant. Your lordship needs not apprehend any undue preferences with regard to his majesty's service abroad; for I believe your lordship may have the satisfaction to believe that the king does you all the justice upon that account that your lordship can desire. I am going to write another ostensible for our friend, which will be short, for I have but little to say as matters now stand, but to keep on foot the correspondence.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Praises cardinal Fleury and Chauvelin for their joint-endeavours to promote a general pacification—Danger of procrastinating matters.

(Secret.)

London, December 24—January 4, 1735-6.

MY LORD;

THE favorable prospect of a generall pacification in Europe gave me so much pleasure and satisfaction, that I am allways extremely concerned when I see any unnecessary rubs or difficulties arise that may obstruct or retard the conclusion of this desirable work. From the time that his eminency the cardinal and monsieur le Garde des Sçeaux entered into that friendly and confidential manner of transacting businesse with your lordship, I promised myself all reasonable successe. It is the continuance of that, and that alone, which can bring this great affair to a happy conclusion; and I cannot upon this occasion omitt this opportunity of desiring your lordship, if you think it worth the trouble, to make my sincerest compliments to his eminency upon that agreeable prospect, and for the great share he has had in conducting and forwarding this important transaction, which I make no doubt but he will persevere to see perfected and fully accomplished; that it may for ever be remembered to his honour that he gave a generall peace to Europe, threatened allmost immediately with a generall war, a work that required not only the great creditt and influence which he so justly holds in the councils of Europe, but that great capacity, temper, and resolution which have been seen and admired

through his whole administration, and his eminency knows that in these great undertakings

Fine coronatur, *fine probatur opus.*

And now I am upon this subject, it would be inexcusable in me not to do justice to the meritt and services of monsieur Chauvelyn. His joynt endeavours to forward the publick wellfare are too remarkable not to be confessed and acknowledged, and received with that satisfaction which they justly deserve.

But the chief occasion of my giving your lordship this trouble is to spur your court on to remove difficulties and delays, which seem rather to procrastinate than forward businesse. Surely monsieur Fenelon will be ordered to make his communication and requisition in form, that may enable the maritime powers to declare that approbation, which is the first necessary step. If our friends the Dutch are as awkward and backward with the French in making peace, as they were with the emperour in regard to entering into the war, France had so great advantage from the first, that they should more readily dispense with the latter; and I hope every appearance will be removed that can be construed into affected delay. Time passes: we have not a month now to the meeting of our parliament. If any thing is to be said there to add weight to the dispatch of the present system, lett it be considered what can be done towards declaring the approbation of the maritime powers, if the communication and requisition is not made in a manner to found it upon.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

Settles the mode of their correspondence—Gives his private opinion concerning a northern league between Sweden and Denmark, and the maritime powers—On the mediation between Russia and the Porte—On the succession of Berg and Juliers—In all instances recommends cautious proceedings.

(Private.)

DEAR BROTHER; London, June 18—29, N. S. 1736.

I FIND there may be some difficulty in carrying on this summer's correspondence between you and me; for I do apprehend you will be constantly ask'd what letters you have, and as constantly desired to show them, which will be unavoidable, unless upon particular occasions I give you the trouble of a separate paper with an ostensible letter to be produced: such a companion this shall have. Look upon this as my private thoughts suggested to you alone.

There seems to me to be three points now upon the tapis that may deserve consideration. The affairs of Berg and Juliers; the mediation betwixt the czarina and the Porte; and a northern league, said to be in view, to be form'd between Denmark, Sweden, and the maritime powers, to observe the growing power of Muscovy. Of this last I shall make no mention in my other letter to you, tho' I cannot suppose but it must have been mentioned to you by the king and by Mr. Finch, who I understand has mentioned it to the king as suggested by monsieur Rossencrantz; but you are to know nothing of this from me, till you hear further of it. Upon this point I must begin with observing, that count Kinski, in his parting conference with me, men-

tion'd such a design as a cause of jealousy and complaint in the court of Vienna, which, as I had not heard one word of, I very roundly denied the least notion of it: and for my part I cannot conceive what inducements should lead us into such a negotiation, the surmise of which must give offence to the czarina, in consequence to the emperour, and may tend to make the courts of France and Vienna more intirely one, and in the conclusion at the expence of the maritime powers. And I cannot think the state of affairs in any part of Europe settled enough to make us desire to be engag'd sooner, or more than we shall necessarily be call'd upon to be so. Lett us wait, and see how things will turn out, and then determine what part to take. The late treaties with Denmark and Sweden have been burthensome and expensive, and our subsidies will never be unwellcome to them.

The next article that naturally occurs is the mediation between Muscovy and the Porte; and here too, I think, we should defer concerning ourselves, untill it is demanded of us by both parties. I observe by Mr. Robinson's letters, that it is expected at Vienna that the Porte should make a formal demand, and, *in that expectation,* full powers are order'd for Mr. Tatman *pro istâ vice.* But it seems to me, that this will be conditional: and altho' no mention is made of such an expectation from the Russians, the strict alliance that subsists between the emperour and the czarina persuade me that no step would be taken upon this subject at Vienna but in concert with the czarina. That should likewise be equally expected by us; and if the demand of both is made, we should then do nothing but in concert with the Imperial court and the States Generall.

I have read the long letter from count Osterman to the grand vizir, which seems to me to be as strong a remonstrance of a long continued series of violences and oppressions as it is possible for one power to lay to the charge of another; and altho' it concludes with

professions of a sincere desire for peace, that is no more than is usual in all declarations of war: and when sir E. Falkener is desir'd to deliver the letter, nothing is said to him that implies at all any desire of our mediation, but proposes the sending ministers reciprocally to the respective borders to treat and adjust, without any mention of the intervention of other powers. These reasons induce me to think, that we are in this case too to wait for events and proper applications, and to be well assured of the real sentiments of both the Imperial and Russian courts, before we offer our good offices, and take any step which may possibly disoblige, without a probability of doing any good.

The same spiritt of not being too forward induces me to think our taking any part as yett in the affairs of Berg and Juliers is not advisable. In that case we must wait for the sentiments of the emperour and France, and what part they will probably take, before, in compliance with the Dutch, we make any declarations which may be thoroughly disobliging to the king of Prussia, and in which we may be left singly with the Dutch. It is most certainly a very desirable thing to me, if it were possible, that all future occasions of a rupture in Europe should be remedied and prevented. But as no court of Europe, except the Dutch, have an inclination to make the settlement of that affair a part of the present pacification, but both the emperor and France are *expressly of opinion to postpone that affair till the chief business of the present negotiation shall be over*, and as there is in the preliminaries a positive exclusion of all matters foreign from the late war, I see great inconveniencies that may arise from our pressing that affair to be carried on at the same time, altho' in a separate negotiation, with the generall transactions now upon the tapis. Upon further consideration, I see no occasion of your communicating my thoughts upon any of the heads at present to the king, but leave them for your own information and amusement only; and

shall write you only a short letter upon the army matters, transmitted now by sir William Young, as far as I had troubled the king about them before he went from home.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

On the explosion of gunpowder—Riots in Spitalfields about employing Irishmen.

DEAR BROTHER; London, July 29—August 9, 1736.

THE excuse for my long silence you will easily conclude to be principally owing to my absence in the country; and altho' I have been some days in town, the absence of the duke of Newcastle, upon account of the death of lady Lincoln, and most of the other lords being dispersed, has made it unnecessary to trouble you with any occurrences from hence, till the late disorders that have happened this week made it proper that his majesty should be acquainted with the true state of what has happened. You will have been acquainted with the insolent affair at Westminster-hall, and the measures that have been taken thereupon. Since my coming to town, I have been endeavouring to trace out the authors and managers of that vile transaction, and there is no reason to doubt but the whole was projected and executed by a sett of low Jacobites, who talked of setting fire to the gallery built for the marriage of the princess royall, by a preparation which they call a *phosphorus*, that takes fire from the air. Of this I have had an account from the same fellow that brought me these and many such sort of intelligencies. He has promised to give a more particular account, but declines giving evidence.

At the same time there are great endeavours using by the same sort of instruments to inflame the people, and to raise great tumults upon Michaelmas-day, when the ginn-act takes place; and as these lower sorts of Jacobites appear at this time more busy than they have for a great while, they are very industrious, and taking advantage of every thing that offers, to raise tumult and disorders among the people. An instance of this has happened this week, in which they have undoubtedly mixed and promoted, altho' I am not of the opinion that they were the first authors and instruments of these riotts and tumultuous mobbs.

On Monday night last, there was an appearance of numbers of people being assembled in a very disorderly manner at Shoreditch near Spittlefields. Their cry and complaint was of being under-worked and starved by the Irish: *Down with the Irish*, &c. But that night the numbers were not very great, and they dispersed of themselves without doing any mischief.

It is necessary here to explain what is meant by this complaint against the Irish, which is founded upon greater numbers than ordinary, as is said, of Irish being here, and not only working at hay and corn harvest, as has been usual, but letting themselves out to all sort of labour considerably cheaper than the English labourers have; and numbers of them being imployed by the weavers upon the like terms. This last particular, together with an incident that happened in those parts, is thought to have occasioned the scene being laid at that end of the town. They are building a new church at Shoreditch, where, I am told, the master workmen discharged at once a great number of all sorts of labourers, and took in at once Irish men, who served for above a third less per day; and this I am at present, and as yett of opinion, is the principal cause of the uneasiness that has stirred up the mob, or at least, I think, is the only cause that great numbers of them know any thing of.

Upon this pretence the tumult began on Monday night. On Tuesday evening they assembled again in greater bodies, and were, about seven a clock, thought to be above two thousand in number. They now grew more riotous; they attacked a publick house kept by an Irishman, where the Irish resorted and victualled, broke down all the doors and windows, and quite gutted the house. Another house of the same sort underwent the same fate. By this time (these places being without the jurisdiction of the citty) the magistrates and deputy lieutenants of the Tower Hamletts were assembled, to endeavour to disperse them. The proclamation was read; but the mob, wholly regardless of the proclamation, increased every minute, and were thought to be about four thousand strong. The magistrates, upon this, gave orders for raising the militia; and in the mean time the deputy lieutenants wrote to the commanding officers in the Tower, to send to their assistance such a number of the guards as they could spare; upon which an officer, with about 50 men, was sent by major White. Upon the appearance of the guards, the mob retired, shifted from one street and alley to another, and gave no resistance; and by break of day were all dispersed. All Wednesday, things remained very quiet, untill the evening, when the mob rose again to as great a number; but the militia of the Tower Hamletts being then raised, marched against them; but the mob in the same manner retired before them whenever they came, and gave not the least resistance. The deputy lieutenants upon this wrote to the officers of the Tower that they did not want their assistance; and in this situation things remained all Wednesday night; the mob continuing together in great bodies untill the approach of the militia, but as constantly running away upon sight of them, and so dispersed themselves before the morning.

The deputy lieutenants were with me this morning, and desired no further orders than what had been all-

ready given, that the guards of the Tower might assist them if necessary. My lord mayor, sir John Williams, was likewise with me, and gave the strongest assuranees of his zeal and resolution to discharge his duty, if the disorders spread in the citty.

I sent severall persons both nights to mix with the mob, and to learn what their cry and true meaning was; and by all accounts the chief and original grievance is the affairs of the Irish, and so understood by the generality of the mob: but in severall quarters, the ginn-act was cried out against; in some few, words of disaffection were thrown out; and one body of men, of about eighty, were led on by a fellow that declared for liberty and property. It is said that money was dispersed both nights, but that does not as yett appear to be certain. But altho' the complaint of the Irish was the first motive, the Jacobites are blending with it all other discontents, endeavouring to stir up the distillers and ginn-retailers, and to avail themselves of the spiritt and fury of the people.

P. S. July 30th. I have now received an account of what passed last night. It was between ten and eleven before any number at all appeared in bodies; they did not amount to 300; they fled before the militia from place to place without any resistance, or doing any mischief but defacing one weaver's house, who, they said, had employed Irish journeymen. I believe there is now an end of this bustle, and so I hope will all attempts end to disturb the peace of his majestie's government.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

On the riots occasioned by the Gin act.

London, September 30—Oct. 11, 1736.

DEAR BROTHER;

I HAVE forborn troubling you with the various surmises and apprehensions which of late at different times have fill'd the town with different fears and expectations, concerning the first and immediate consequences that might attend the commencement of the gin act, because it was difficult at some times to form any probable opinion of what might happen; and at other times, and especially lately, it appear'd a great deal more reasonable that there would not be any trouble or disorder at all, untill about the middle of last week; I then began to receive again accounts from all quarters of the town that the Jacobites were busy and industrious in endeavouring to stir up the common people, and make an advantage of the universal clamour that prevailed among the populace at the approaching expiration of this darling vice. The scheme that was laid was, for all the distillers that were able, to give away *gratis*, to all that shou'd ask for it, as much ginn and strong waters as they shou'd desire, and the great distillers were to supply all the retailers and small shops with as much as they shou'd want to be distributed and given away in like manner. The shops were to begin to be opened on Tuesday evening, the eve of Michaelmas-day, and to be continued and repeated on Wednesday night, that the mobb, being made thus drunk, might be prepar'd and ready to comitt any sort of mischief; and in order to this, anonymous letters were sent to the distillers and town retailers in

all parts of the town, to instruct them, and incite them to rise and join their friends, and do as their neighbours did. Four of these letters have fallen into my hands, which the persons to whom they were directed, discovered, and brought to us: and by the excise officers that go round the town I am inform'd that letters to the same purpose were dropt,* and to most of the distillers in all quarters. Those we have seen differ very little from each other in the tenour and substance, and the strong criminal expressions are in all the same, only transposed. In such as were less formal, and not so labour'd, the word was given sir Robert and sir Joseph.† Upon the information, the queen was pleased to give such orders to the guards as you will have had an account of, which have had the design'd effect, and in the opinion of all mankind are thought to have prevented the greatest mischief and disorders that have of late been known or heard of, at least we have the satisfaction to have our measures universally applauded.

I must beg leave to say, there has been infinite care taken to observe and watch all their motions for above a month past; and upon the turn that the Spittlefields riotts took, I think I may affirm, that the whole spiritt was at once dashed and seemed to have been totally laid aside; but upon the contrary success at Edinburgh, the fire kindled anew, and nothing less than such vigorous measures could have prevented the evil, which I hope now is put an end to. But the murmuring and complaints of the common people, for want of ginn, and the great sufferings and loss of the dealers in spirituous liquors in general, have created such uneasiness, that they well deserve a great deal of attention and consideration. And I am not without my apprehensions, that a non-observance of the law in some may create great trouble; and a sullen acquiescence and present submission in others, in hopes of gaining

* Illegible, probably directed. † Jekyll.

redress by parliament, may lay the foundation of very riotous and mobbish applications when we next meet.

October 1st. That last night is likewise past over in perfect quiett, altho' the patroles in the streets were taken off.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

On the riot at Edinburgh, and the murder of captain Porteous—Measures to be pursued—Thinks that Mr. Finch should be supplied with money to counteract the French intrigues in Sweden—Recommends Mr. Villars to be minister in Poland—And the lord chancellor's son to be clerk of the dispensations.

DEAR BROTHER; London, Sept. 20th—Oct. 1st, 1736.

YOU will have received by the last post, from the duke of Newcastle, an account of the horrible outrage committed last week at Edinburgh. The letter from lord justice clerk, and the narration that came with it, are all the accounts that have come as yet to the hands of the government; by which you will observe, that the magistrates had not then received any information, or made, or attempted to make, the least discovery of any of the authors or ringleaders of this barbarous murther. It appears, by some private letters, that the whole villiany was begun and perpetrated in two hours; and that the mob dispersed of themselves as soon as their work was done, and flung down and left their arms that they had seised in the guard-room, in the Grass-market, the place of their vile execution; so that all things seem, at present, as quiet at Edinburgh as if nothing had happened.

This leaves nothing to be done immediately, but to use all possible means to discover the criminals, and to

take effectual care, if they are discovered, that they may be secured and brought to condign punishment. For the first purpose, the most peremptory orders to the magistrates attended with ample rewards and encouragements, must be given, and a sufficient force placed in the castle and suburbs of the city, with proper and necessary orders to defend and assist the civil power in putting the laws in execution, if any discoveries can be made, and convictions obtained upon them.

But here lye my greatest apprehensions, that we have, as yet, no prospect of coming at either, altho' it is impossible but the chief agents must be known to great numbers of people. But so great a panick seised them at the time, and such a terror seems to me to continue upon them, that I very much fear it will be difficult to persuade them to do any thing that may expose them again to the same ill consequences. I speak this as my own private observations; notwithstanding which, I think nothing must be omitted that can possibly be done to make examples of such an unheard-of attempt.

Lord Ilay goes for Scotland this week; and I think is determined to exert himselfe to the utmost upon this occasion. The queen's orders are likewise sent to general Wade to repair immediately to Scotland, to countenance and assist the government in their further proceedings.

I had this day a long discourse with Mr. Finch, who is preparing to leave this place in a few days. He mentioned to me what he had proposed to his majesty at Hanover, that some method should be taken to strengthen the hands of the king's friends in Sweden, and to enable them to encounter the agents of France with their own weapons. He seemed to think that a credit given him for about 5,000l. to be drawn for as occasion shall require, at three or more different payments, might answer the purpose. I promised him to desire you to represent this to his majesty as a matter

worthy of his consideration, and that might be of great service. If his majesty is pleased to be of that opinion, you will settle it with Mr. Finch, and let me know the king's pleasure upon it. Mr. Finch pressed me very earnestly to recommend him to his majestie's goodness for the addition of plenipotentiarie's pay; which indeed he convinced me, after so long service, was not an unreasonable request; and I have the queen's commands to lay this before his majesty in the most favourable light.

I believe you are not unacquainted that lord Jersey was very sollicitous, before his majesty left England, that his brother Mr. Villars * might succeed Mr. Woodward as minister in Poland; and now that the publick affairs seem to be so far settled in those parts, that it may not be improper for his majesty to name a minister, lord Jersey has renewed his application to the queen, that she would be pleased to recommend his brother to his majesty for this employment, which her majesty has commanded me to do in her name. By the character I hear of the young gentleman, I think his majesty will make a very proper choice; and I am obliged to say, lord Jersey very well deserves this mark of his majesty's favour; his behaviour in all respects, is what his majesty must approve.

The queen has directed a warrant to make Dr. Brook *regius* professor of Oxford, pursuant to a minute entered in the secretarie's office, by the king's command. I received a letter from the lord chancellor, to desire his majesty would be pleased to let him name a successor to the office of clerk of the dispensations, now vacant by the death of the former. The office, his lordship says, is wholly under him. I acquainted her majesty with this request, who was pleased to think it reasonable, and ordered me to lay it before his majesty. The person the lord chancellor will propose, is his second son, but desires that it may not be known, lest

* Afterward lord Clarendon.

so long notice before his new election, should stir up an opposition, and give him trouble. I send you a letter from the lord chancellor upon this subject.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Thanks cardinal Fleury for his civilities and advice, and is willing to open a secret correspondence with him.

(Secret.)

MY LORD; London, Oct 29—Nov. 11, 1736.

I DEFERRED acknowledging the favour of your lordship's of the 23d instant N. S. untill I had an opportunity of speaking my mind with great freedom and sincerity, in return to the civilities which his eminence the cardinal had been pleased to expresse for me: and if this may prove the beginning of a correspondence to be carried on with friendship and confidence between his eminence and me, I shall be very glad to improve and carry it on for the mutual honour and interest of our respective masters.

I must begin with returning his eminence my thanks for his friendly advice, in relation to the late outragious proceeding in Scotland; and when his eminence is pleased to recommend temper and moderation, all the world is witnesse how much that spiritt hath been the rule of his majesty's government through the whole course of his reign, and to such a degree that it is become allmost no question, whether the too great lenity of the government has not greatly encouraged these late tumults and disorders. When the enemies

of a government construe mercy into weaknesse, and are bold enough to promise themselves impunity from what they call a fear of punishing, it is high time to check at once their daring attempts. But the present affair of Scotland is not enough looked into as yett, to determine his majesty what part to take; but so great authority as his eminence's will not fail to have its due weight.

But I must come now to the second part of your excellencie's letter, of an infinite more generall and extensive concern; which is his eminence's conversation upon a firm union between the protestant powers of Germany, to be established and supported in concert with the crown of France. His eminency has before, several times, mentioned to your lordship his thoughts concerning a more strict union and friendship to be established between the crowns of France and England.

The queen has, by the secretary of state, constantly declared her readinesse to enter into such a negotiation, and to promote it as far as can be thought reasonable and just. But as I am now writing with my own hand, in confidence to your lordship, in return of the cardinal's obliging professions towards me, I make no difficulty to venture to go a little farther than might be proper in an office dispatch, and to desire your lordship to acquaint the cardinal, if he will be so free as to open his mind more explicitly to your lordship, he shall have my assistance and concurrence; which I promise the more freely, because I am confident his eminency will propose nothing to his majesty, but what he may with honour and justice enter into. What I mean to say is, that tho' the notion in generall commands at first sight our greatest attention, yett as it must consist of so many parts, and regard so many different interests, it is impossible for a man to form any judgement or hazard an opinion upon a proposition so generall, and hitherto not explained. If the cardinal will draw out the

heads of what he has conceived, and transmit them by your lordship to me, I do give my honour that what comes in this channel shall be equally unknown to every other one of his majestie's servants, as what I now write is to every person living, the queen only excepted.

I must now take a freedom which I hope the cardinal will excuse, as it procceds from the greatest sincerity, and is said with the greatest deference. I must confesse I have found myselfe under the greatest difficulty to reconcile the advices your lordship has given us, from the cardinal's own mouth, of his sentiments with regard to the conclusion of the peace in generall, and in particular with respect to England and the maritime powers, with the intelligences, and of no little authority, which we receive from Vienna. For whilst the cardinal is talking in this pacifick and friendly manner to your lordship, we are *assured, from Vienna,* that propositions have been sent from France for forming a separate peace between the emperour and France, exclusive of the maritime powers: that some project or scheme of this kind had for a time laid dormant, and was not at first rellished by the court of Vienna. But we are assured now, that under various artifices and disguises, it begins to gain ground a little; and the shape in which it is now represented to us is, that it will be necessary for the three principal powers, viz. the emperour, France, and Spain, first to conclude a definitive treaty of peace upon the foot of the preliminaries, without any participation of the maritime powers, and that treaty to be the foundation afterwards of a generall definitive treaty.

The tendency and consequences of such a project, if it should prevail, are too obvious; but in particular, are no ways consistent with what is said to you; and I do hope the cardinal will give your excellency satisfaction upon this article.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE, TO BE LAID BEFORE THE KING.

[Hardwicke and Waldegrave Papers.]

(Without date or signature, probably written on the 8th—19th of October.)

Observations on the Pretender's letter.

(Copy.)

THE letter lately fallen into the hands of his majesty's ministers, and transmitted to his majesty by this messenger, certainly deserves the highest regard and attention, as it is a letter from the pretender *himself* to his principal agent in Paris, with his particular instructions at the present conjuncture. It is a certain proof of what the pretender thinks and hopes for at this present time, or at least what he thinks adviseable to persuade the several powers of Europe to think and believe concerning his affairs, in order to induce them to undertake his cause, in the favourable circumstances in which he represents and asserts them to be.

The letter being in his majesty's hands, it is unnecessary for me to trouble his majesty with a long paraphrase and observations upon it; but submit to his majesty's own judgment the inferences and conclusions that are naturally to be drawn from so authentic a piece.

But the substance of the letter appears to me in this light: the pretender had, before this, pursuant to advice sent him from his agent at Paris, wrote to Vienna to discover the dispositions of the emperor after the intire conclusion of the peace, upon supposition that France was to make an attempt in his favour, in case the emperor would make no opposition.

By the answers received, the pretender sees clearly that what he had wrote had not been sufficient to engage the emperor to declare himself upon an affair so delicate and important; and enters into and seems to admit, the reasons of the court of Vienna for not declaring their sentiments before France, and at this time, and at the instance of the pretender only. It is reasonable to be concluded, that the advice sent by O'Brian to the pretender, to discover the dispositions of the emperor in case France would make an attempt in his favour, was at the instigation of the court of France insisting to know the sense of the emperor upon the application made to France in his favour.

And the emperor declining to declare, the pretender, by this letter renews his application to the court of France, and argues, that the way to know truly the dispositions of the emperor is, for France to determine what she will do; and if they wish that the emperor would not oppose any attempt of France, and sincerely desire to unite with the emperor, France will not hesitate to sound the emperor herself. The pretender then declares, he is persuaded that the emperor is intirely disposed not to oppose him; and he has so great an idea of his integrity and probity, that he is fully convinced they will risk nothing in this: for although the confidence between the emperor and France ought to be mutual upon this article, the emperor will not think he has a right to expect that France should speak first at present, especially considering the insinuations which the emperor has made some months ago.

The pretender then presses France to undertake it, even without the emperor's declaring that he will not oppose; because it is impossible the emperor, in his present situation, should give any jealousy to France for a long time; that when every thing is ready for execution, to show their confidence in the emperor, they may communicate the project to him, and desire his agreement.

If what the pretender asserts is true, it is plain there have been transactions in both the courts of Vienna and France with the agents of the pretender; and that he flatters himself he has received so much encouragement from both, that on one side he is persuaded the emperor is intirely disposed not to oppose him; on the other, he hopes France will undertake it, if the emperor would previously declare as much, which he thinks France should not insist upon, considering the insinuations which the emperor has formerly made; and this proves that the negociations of the pretender in both courts, have been with the privity and reciprocal communication of both. For the insinuations formerly made by the emperor, in favour of the pretender, could have no weight with France; and the mutual confidence now demanded by France, justly implies the same thing.

The representations which the pretender makes of the favourable circumstances of his affairs, is the least he could do, when he is to persuade other powers to undertake his cause, and is but the natural effect of the representations which the Jacobites made from hence of the late disorders here, which are echoed back from Rome into France, and aggravated as much as possible in his favour. But it is now to be considered what orders your majesty will be pleased to send from hence to your ministers abroad upon this undeniable proof of attempts carrying on to subvert your government, and what further measures shall be taken to defeat these detestable designs, in which my poor endeavours shall be exerted to the utmost with a most inviolable and unshaken zeal and resolution.

In the first place, I think the queen's orders to lord Waldegrave for his conduct upon this occasion, both toward the Garde des Sceaux and the cardinal, are perfectly right. For as monsieur Chauvelin thought fit to make professions, and to treat this letter of the pre-

tender as a vain attempt, and as the effect of false hopes which he flattered himself with, without any grounds or encouragement from the court of France, it is very proper to seem to believe him, so far to depend upon his professions as to make no doubt but that his answer to the application upon this letter was totally to disclaim any design to undertake the cause of the pretender, either with or without the privity or concurrence of the emperor; and to represent to him how reasonable and necessary it is, upon such a certain proof that the pretender relies upon the assistance of France, how groundless soever those expectations may be, for the king to expect a direct explanation of the sentiments and resolution of the court of France upon a question of the nearest concern to him. And lord Waldegrave may very properly observe to monsieur Chauvelin, that there being a positive direction in the letter to apply both to the cardinal and to him; and the whole tenor of the letter importing previous transactions with the pretender in both courts, and very probably with a reciprocal privity and participation, lord Waldegrave may insist not only upon such explanations as may give the king entire satisfaction, but hope that the answer of the court of France to this application of the pretender will be such as may cutt off all hopes of the pretender's, and put an end to the disorders which disturb the peace and quiet of his majesty's kingdoms, which are kept up and fomented by nothing but the hopes and expectations that are daily given to the disaffected here of assistance and support from abroad.

As this part is what in justice the king may demand of France, it may equally be insisted upon with the cardinal, tho' not with the same introduction, or upon the foundation of the letter: but lord Waldegrave, in speaking to him, may insist upon the king's having such certain and positive intelligence of applications

being made to France on behalf of the pretender (in the manner contained in the letter) as to desire express and explicit satisfaction upon this great point.

And lord Waldegrave may likewise add, that the king has intelligence that assurances are given to the Jacobites here, that both France and the emperor are engaged to assist and support the pretender immediately after the conclusion of the peace. In consequence therefore of the frequent assurances which the cardinal has given to the king of his friendship and good faith, lord Waldegrave may desire the cardinal to let him know what transactions there have been between the agents of the pretender and the courts of Vienna and France; or at least, if he will not acknowledge, or may not think himself at liberty to betray any confidence made to him by the court of Vienna, concerning the sentiments of the court of France; and it is easy to make him sensible that as long as any hopes are given to the pretender from France, the emissaries and agents of the pretender will magnify and aggravate every circumstance to keep up the spirit of their party, which cannot but greatly affect the quiett of his majesty's government. For it is most certain that the tumults and disorders here are so represented abroad as to be look'd upon as so many declarations in favour of the pretender, and are made use of as arguments to engage foreign powers to undertake a work hopefull and easy; and on the other side, the hopes the pretender's agents pretended they received from foreign powers are transmitted hither, and give all the encouragement to the Jacobites here, which keeps up the troubles and disorders here, that nothing is more certain than that if the Jacobites despaired of foreign assistance, the king would not have any trouble from the disaffected at home; so much does it depend upon the cardinal, by letting the sincerity of his intentions be known, to put an end at once to all these broils and

ferments concerning the pretender both at home and abroad.

And as it appears that the period fixed upon for any attempt is upon the intire conclusion of the peace, it may be proper time to take this occasion to desire the cardinal to explain himself upon the pacification; which (without hazarding any private intelligence which the king has had of monsieur Chauvelin's project of a separate treaty between the emperor and France) may reasonably be supposed must be reduced to one of the three following schemes: either to have a congress for settling the general pacification with the powers engaged in the late war and maritime powers together; or to make a private treaty of friendship between France and England, as hinted by the cardinal; or a separate treaty between the emperor and France, as projected. And it seems to me that these three points may be stated to the cardinal as the natural result from reasoning and considering this great event, and he may be desired to explain himself fully to the king upon the professions he has already made.

It seems very material to me that, as the pretender founds all his hopes upon measures to be taken immediately upon the conclusion of the peace, it should appear that regard is shew'd to England upon the general pacification, and that his majesty should be included and comprehended in it. For such a renewal of treaties with all the great powers would be an absolute rejecting of the cause of the pretender; and therefore any thing is better than a separate treaty between France and the emperor, exclusive of the maritime powers, which would be look'd upon as a forerunner of espousing the cause of the pretender; and therefore lord Waldegrave should be ordered to talk to the cardinal with this view and this purpose.

This occasion likewise calls for proper application to be made to the court of Vienna; but as her majesty is

not determined in what channel to put that, whether to talk first to monsieur Wasner, or to take any other method which the king may think more proper, the delay of a few days for a full and due consideration may not be a loss of time that will do any prejudice. Sending it directly to the court of Vienna, where Bartestein governs all, whom we know to be under the immediate influence of France, and with whom Chauvelin must carry on his project of a separate treaty if it succeed, in a matter that deserves great deliberation; and I cannot but say that I should look upon such a separate treaty between the emperor and France, to be little less than a direct preparatory for their ent'ring jointly into the cause of the pretender as described in his letter.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

Containing remarks on the discovery of the Pretender's letter delivered by Chauvelin.

(Private.)

DEAR BROTHER; London, October 11—22, 1736.

YOU will have seen before this time the extraordinary letter that fell by great accident into lord Waldegrave's hands; you will have seen the reflections which occur'd to the king's servants upon the consideration of it, as likewise the orders which her majesty was pleas'd to send to lord Waldegrave upon that occasion; which orders not having been receiv'd by lord Waldegrave, or executed, when his last dispatches came away, no further conclusions can as yett be drawn from his lord-

ship's expostulations with the French ministers upon them.

However, as this consideration is of the greatest importance, and nearest concern to his majesty and his dominions, I could not forbear throwing my thoughts together, to be submitted to better judgments. I cannot think it at all advisable at present to press either the court of Vienna or the court of France to be more explicit upon this nice subject. We may drive them to the wall, and put them under a necessity of coming to extremities sooner than they may otherwise intend. If they are once made sensible that you suspect or believe the worst, and their intentions are really bad, there is no management to be kept, or time to be lost, if it is for their advantage to hasten the execution. Perhaps it had been better that monsieur Chauvelyn had not known what we know; but that is over, and with him now we must play dissimulation against dissimulation. But the first thing to be consider'd is, whether France or the emperor, or both joyntly, or joyntly or separately, have been trafficking with the pretender; and how far they may have gone in giving him such hopes and encouragement as are expressly contained in his letter. I am willing to suppose that the pretender greatly flatters himself; but we should be equally guilty of deceiving ourselves, if we believ'd he had no foundation at all for all that is so strongly implied and expressly asserted.

Lett us further suppose that both courts are at present putting off and avoiding to answer his pressing importunities, by refering him back from one to the other, and this would be to make the most favourable construction we possibly can for our good allies. As then it will be very difficult to have any certain knowledge of what is past, we have nothing to do but to observe and collect from their future measures what is reasonably to be expected and apprehended. It is to

be observ'd that the pretender confines all his expectations *to the entire conclusion of the peace,* which at least gives us so much time to turn ourselves. But as that is to be the crisis, we must narrowly observe all the previous and preparatory steps and their tendency, to see how far in winding up their bottoms the powers concern'd leave themselves at liberty by ent'ring into no new engagements with us, to putt in execution any designs against us, or by renewing or confirming all former treaties and engagements with us, they publickly and avowedly contradict and disappoint these imaginary schemes of the Jacobites. And this, I think, will greatly turn upon the part the maritime powers shall be desir'd or admitted to have, at what time and in what manner, in the conclusion of the generall pacification.

There have been several methods talk'd of at the several courts of finishing this great work. Some time agoe it seem'd to be resolved, and was allmost so declar'd at the court of Vienna, that count Uhlefeild and count Kinsky return'd to Vienna for no other purpose but to receive their last instructions for carrying the negotiations to the Hague, and, in concert with the *maritime powers,* to conclude the general pacification. But this scheme of the court of Vienna has been attended with excuses from time to time, no communication made of any transactions, and so in the publick appearance it seems to remain at this time. At the time that this seem'd to be the resolution of the court of Vienna, we were told daily, from France in generall, that France would avoid this measure if they could, but that it was still insisted upon at Vienna.

The cardinal at this time in great confidence to my lord Walgrave, and with the uttmost secrecy from Chauvelyn, talks of a separate treaty of friendship between France and England, and this at different times has been explain'd, as you know. The cardinal at the same time confesses he acquainted duke d'Antin with

this scheme, who was against it, and acknowledg'd to be a confident of monsieur Chauvelyn. The next occurrence is, intelligence from 101, [Bussy,] that monsieur Chauvelyn had sent to monsieur Du Theil a project of a separate treaty between France and the emperour. We know how far Bartenstein has putt himself under the power of France; which being carried on by Du Theil from Chauvelyn, they three must be look'd upon as one, and ingag'd mutually in carrying on the same views and designs.

These matters remaining some time in silence and under a sort of suspence, this week's correspondences open a new scene; and 101, [Bussy] acquaints us that France insisting upon it, the court of Vienna seem'd to be yielding to Chauvelyn's project of a separate treaty, and not to be carried to the Hague. Mr. Robinson in his last letters confirms this; and in his reasonings upon the present situation of affairs, with great *authenticity* as he calls it, accounts for this new disposition in the court of Vienna not to go immediately to the Hague untill the first *definitive* treaty *without the maritime powers* shall be concluded between the three principal powers of Vienna, France, and Spain.

If this proves to be the case, monsieur Chauvelyn has carried his point; and whether it be by imposing upon both the cardinal and the court of Vienna, who may not see his views and designs, but are drawn in by plausible representations; or whether they are more or lesse in the secrett, the consequence to us is just the same: for if the peace founded upon the preliminaries is made between the three great powers without the admission of the maritime powers, it cannot be suppos'd that so material a step is taken but to serve some particular ends and purposes; and as nothing is so naturall as, upon this new settlement of Europe, that the particular powers interested should desire to have their new possessions secur'd and guarantied in the best manner, it is not very easy to find a better reason for their de-

clining the guaranties of the maritime powers, but not caring to ask what they are not willing to give; and by this means they will not be restrain'd by any new obligations from pursuing such measures as their inclinations, interests, or resentment may prompt them to.

I do not love refining too much, and I hope I am not too often guilty of it; but when I am upon this tender subject, I cannot help carrying my speculations a little further. And here I beg leave to recollect some occurrences that have passed in the course of late years, and what we have heard to have been the thoughts and language of the several courts now under consideration, as their passions or humours have variously operated. There was an observation made early in the course of the present transactions, that there seem'd to be a particular industry in the courts of France and Spain to endeavour to avoid making any mention of the quadruple alliance in the progress and conclusion of this pacification. The court of Spain, in their first heat and resentment upon the late preliminaries between the emperour and France, when they call'd upon us to assist them against such innovations, declar'd to us that they look'd upon the quadruple alliance as the basis and foundation, and even conditional existence, of all the alliances between the two crowns. France upon the last Vienna treaty declar'd it in us a breach of the Hanover treaty.

The court of Vienna has been very free upon our not making good our engagements to them in the late war. I may add one word of the regard the emperour thinks he owes to the Dutch. Upon the same account I will not draw the inferences which these several courts may in their way of reasoning make from these premises, if they should think it for their interest to act such a part; but there is one conclusion naturally follows, that the maritime powers being admitted into the definitive treaty sets all right, and heals all the pretended

defects which may be alledg'd and started as time and occasion shall serve. This leads me to one further consideration, which I suggest purely for future deliberation. Is it not then materiall for us to endeavour with honour and decency to have the maritime powers admitted into the generall pacification? I shall not think it a favourable symptom if that should be avoided or postpon'd, upon any plausible pretence whatsoever, although we should never discover our motive for desiring it. If a previous convention should be insisted upon between the three powers, and we should be told the maritime powers will be invited or admitted, as soon as it is proper and things are brought to perfection, I confess that would not remove my jealousie.

But I submitt it to consideration, whether it may not be advisable for us to begin to think of treating separately with each of the severall powers, for mutuall friendship, defence, and guaranties, without ent'ring into any offensive engagements against any other power. This hint may be taken from the overtures made by the cardinal to lord Walgrave. And if the same negotiation is sett on foot at the same time with the emperour and with Spain, and with the kings of Sardinia and the Sicilies, it may be possible to bring such distinct treaties to a conclusion in a little time, when no man can see through the difficulties and length of a generall treaty. But there seems to me to be one certain use of this manner of proceeding, if we are drove to it, to discover the true sentiments of each court with regard to us, which can scarce be doubted whenever we find difficulties both in a generall and particular negotiation.

1737.

THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE TO THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

Chauvelin declares that he gave the Pretender's letter by mistake.

(Copy.—Extract.)

Paris, January 2, 1737.

FINDING him * thus dispos'd, I asked him whether he had of late heard any thing from the pretender's correspondent; for I could not help being a little curious since the accident of the letter that *fell* into my hands. He said he had not of late heard a word from that quarter: if he had, he would have told me of it. He then took me by the hand, and in the most emphatical manner said, You may depend upon it, that my giving you that paper was by meer chance. There was no artifice in it. I will own to you, I was at first surprised when you mention'd it to me; but assure yourself, I have ever since look'd upon that mistake as a lucky one for me, since it gave me so full an opportunity of convincing your court that I neither am nor have been a favourer of the pretender, or of his adherents. I have reason to believe your court thought otherwise of me; but surely now they cannot suspect me.

I give your grace an exact account of this conversation. You will judge as well as I can of the dependance that can be had on this man's professions; but I look upon these as an infallible sign of his humiliation and of his fears.

* Chauvelin.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EAR OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Thinks it necessary either to gain Chauvelin, or to obtain his dismission.

(Secret.)

London, December 30—January 10, 1736-7.

MY LORD;

I HAD the honour of your lordship's of the 3rd of January, N. S. and altho' the story you entertained me with was ridiculous enough, yett it is a strong indication of the prevailing opinion of the world where you are, that our friend stands upon very slippery ground when such inventions are thrown out and receiv'd, to prepare mankind for any such sudden change.

Upon the subject of that person it is very hard to know what to say. There is nothing more certain than that a change there is so much to be wish'd for, that 'tis almost impossible we should have the worst of it. At the same time it is as certain, if he is like to stand his ground, that nothing should be neglected to gain him, if that were practicable: your lordship knows how far that experiment was tried, and how it ended. His last advances and professions seem to encourage another attempt, but from the character of the man, it is scarce to be supposed that he meant any thing but to make fair weather under his present difficulties and distresses. What then is to be done? That depends upon a knowledge of the true situation of the person, and upon being able to form a judgment of what will most pro-

bably be his fate; and that, I confesse, from the weakness of his superior, is both difficult and hazardous, lest, by giving him time, he should recover himselfe, and afterwards discover any part that was taken to his prejudice.

Your lordship, therefore, who is upon the spott, can best observe and judge if he is falling, and you can do it with safety. You must strike whilst the iron is hott; and if you can venture and can succeed with the old man, you cannot do a greater piece of service. In the mean time, as all who play fair with sharpers are certainly undone, you must pay dissimulation with dissimulation, and be as civill to him as he can possibly be to you. But I am giving your lordship instructions, who have shewn you do not want them; you know the plea, and I dare say will misse no fair opportunity.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Rejoices at the disgrace of Chauvelin—Satisfied with Bussy's behaviour—Is desirous to know the cardinal's sentiments, and to concur with him in promoting a strict union between England and France.

(Private.)

MY LORD; London, March 7—18, 1736-7.

YOUR lordship will not very much wonder that we have been behind hand of late in our foreign correspondence, considering how fully we have been imployed in our domestick * broils and contests, the most

* Alluding to the motion in parliament for increasing the establishment of the prince of Wales.

troublesome I ever knew, and, from the great object of division, the most dangerous that could have been attempted; but we have got through them, and I doubt not shall be able to gett the better of all such fatal and pernicious projects.

I come now to mention what your lordship will have reasonably expected to have heard of some time, I mean the arrival of monsieur Bussy, who has hitherto behaved himself entirely to our satisfaction; and I make no doubt will continue to do so as long as he stays among us. The removal of monsieur Chauvelin was welcome news here, and to all the world who wish success to the cardinal's administration. He was such a perpetual clog upon the wheels, and acted upon principles so directly contrary to all his eminency's professions and practices, that his best designs were often frustrated, and almost always render'd dilatory and uncertain. And as there is nothing that I have allways desired more, and do now most earnestly wish, than to establish and cultivate a perfect good understanding and confidence with the cardinal, if his eminency will be pleased to explain himself to your lordship upon what points and in what manner he proposes to settle and confirm a perfect friendship and union between our royal masters, for their mutual honour and interest, he shall find on my part all the readiness and sincerity he can possibly desire.

I do not desire in this manner to know what his eminency's views and intentions are, with any design to avoid entering into a closer and more explicit correspondence, or to make any advantage of learning first from the cardinal his thoughts. But as the whole system of carrying on the generall pacification has been in his hands, and the final and definitive conclusion must be under his conduct and direction, it is impossible for me to suggest or begin any negociation, untill I know from his eminency upon what basis and foundation he proposes to proceed; and, when his thoughts

are explain'd, he may depend upon a ready concurrence to promote the common interest of the two crowns; which I think can never be so well secur'd as by a strict friendship and union establish'd upon proper and just foundations. And I confess I am impatient till I can know from your lordship his eminency's further thoughts upon this important and necessary work.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Is willing by the king's approbation to open a secret correspondence with cardinal Fleury—Proposes to admit monsieur Amelot and the duke of Newcastle into it.

(Secret.)

MY LORD; London, May — 1737.

YOUR lordship may very well wonder at my long silence, and the cardinal not without reason be uneasy at the long delay I have given to his eminence's last overtures for beginning and carrying on a private negociation between the two crowns in the manner proposed by his eminence. My only excuse is, the great weight of businesse in parliament, which has taken up and employ'd all my thoughts and time; which now being in the main happily gott over in our house, I beg you will excuse me in the best manner you are able, and make this renewal of our correspondence acceptable to his eminence. Not that I was the least uneasy at this interruption, because I observ'd that matters were not yett come to such a maturity as might make it practicable to proceed upon any particulars that tended

towards the finishing the great and desired work: I mean that untill the present negotiation that has been so long carrying on between the courts of France and Vienna is perfected, and the contents and purport of it made known to his majesty, it seems to me impossible even to lay the foundation of a particular treaty between his majesty and the most christian king. We must be greatly governed and influenc'd by the terms and conditions of the present treaty.

There is one thing most certain, which the cardinal may be assur'd of and depend upon. We have no treaties with any prince or power, but what are publick and known; and consequently his majesty can be under no engagements prejudicial or disagreeable to any of his allies. And his majesty proposes that this may be the basis of all his future treaties to be renew'd, confirm'd, and enter'd into anew with the several powers of Europe, that he may enter into no engagements that may be offensive to, or contravene the conditions or obligations that he is at present under.

Upon this foot his majesty is ready to hear, receive, and to proceed upon any proposition that the cardinal has to propose for settling and establishing a perfect and sincere friendship between his majesty and the most christian king. And as it cannot well be supposed, but his majestie's concurrence, approbation, or perhaps guarantying in some manner the present treaty between the emperour and France, will be ask'd and expected, the communication of this treaty, and the explanations which his eminence shall be pleas'd to make upon this occasion, will naturally lead to the beginning of this private treaty, which is the object of our present consideration.

Neither can I make the least doubt but that the cardinal will think it just and reasonable to give his majesty the same satisfaction concerning any treaties which the christian king may have entered into with any other princes or powers, wherein there may be any

thing contained to the prejudice of any of his majestie's rights or possessions: for instance, the treaties made with the courts of Madrid and Turin, or either of them, upon entering into the late war, if there are any articles to which his majesty has most just objection, it cannot be doubted but that the cardinal will do his majesty justice, and give him all reasonable satisfaction in every particular.

Your lordship will be able to convince the cardinal, that there is no affected delay in this proceeding, nor backwardnesse to settle a sincere and perfect friendship between the two crowns; but in truth the particulars must arise and move from the cardinal alone. And in order to putt the businesse into some form of proceeding, the king readily consents that monsieur Amelot be admitted into the conduct and management of it, as far as the cardinal thinks proper; and for the same reason it will be necessary that the duke of Newcastle has likewise a share in it: the secrett will not be in the least hazard from that confidence, but the correspondence more regular in our way of businesse.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF WALDEGRAVE.

[Waldegrave Papers.]

Is highly gratified with the cardinal's refusal to provide for the Pretender's second son.

(Secret.)

MY LORD; London, August 7—18th, 1737.

I AM favoured with your lordship's of this date, N. S. and I have in a proper manner acquainted the king with the contents. It were very much to be wish'd

that his majesty might have had publick satisfaction for the public affront that was offer'd to him by the ministers of France in foreign courts. But if that is not to be obtain'd, wherein you must still follow the directions you receive from the office, it must be confess'd that the cardinal gives the king a great proof of his personal regard to his majesty in the communication he has made to your lordship of the pope's solicitation in favour of the pretender's second son, and the refusal his eminency has given to comply with that request.

So publick and so beneficial a regard to the family of the pretender must have been look'd upon by all the world as a strong declaration in his favour, and as it would have carried along with it such real and essential advantages, so conspicuous and so permanent, it could have been but one construction, which the cardinal avoiding, and placing that confidence in the king, as to acquaint his majesty with it by your lordship, is an obligation that the king most gratefully acknowledges, will religiously keep the secrett, and hopes the cardinal will continue in this friendly disposition to his majesty (which indeed the king does not at all doubt), never to give such publick encouragement to his enemies and mortification to his friends, as to lett the court of France in some manner adopt and provide for the younger branches of the pretender to his crown. Your lordship will make my best compliments to the cardinal, and assure him on my part of all possible returns of regard, honour, and esteem.

You will be all surpriz'd abroad with the confusion that our royall family is putt into here by the birth of a young princesse. It is a subject that I shall not choose to enlarge much upon in writing; but rather take an opportunity when I give this to Mr. Thompson to talk with him upon the subject. But it is most plain they were determin'd to bring matters to a rupture.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

On the illness and danger of queen Caroline.

London, Tuesday, Nov. 15th, 1737, 12 o'clock at noon.

MY absence in the country is the only reason you did not hear from me last post. The melancholy occasion of my now coming will have reach'd you before this; but tho' it is as dismal a story as ever was told, it will be some satisfaction to you to have a short detail of what has passed, and some little comfort to know the present situation of matters.

The queen was taken ill last Wednesday. By all her complaints, and the symptoms that were confess'd at that time, it was explicitly declared and universally believed to be the gout in her stomach. Her illness was at once so violent that Broxholms was consulted, with Tessier. All the usual and known remedies were plentifully given, but without any effect; for her vomitings continued very frequent, and nothing at all staid in her stomach, and nothing pass'd through her, which last continues still to be the case. The necessity of giving the strongest and hottest medicines, made them think it necessary to bleed freely, which was done three times in the three first days, but all without any visible effect. The case was thought so desperate that sir Hans Sloan and Dr. Hulse were, on Friday, sent for, who totally despaired. Necessity at last discover'd and reveal'd a secrett which had been totally conceal'd and unknown. The queen had a rupture, which is now known not to have been a new accident. Surgeons were sent for, and Mr. Ranby was at first alone call'd in: he, upon first sight, insisted upon further assistance in his pro-

fession, upon which Bussieure and Skipton, a citty-surgeon, very eminent and able, was sent for. They found a great outward inflamation upon the rupture, and immediately lett out that matter, but proceeded further, and made an incision into the cavity of the body near the rupture, from which flow'd immediately great quantities of corrupted matter, and fetid and offensive to the highest degree; and of this noisome kind was what the queen now vomited. All hopes given over, and a mortification judged most certain. Upon further opening, they found the cawl only affected, of which they have twice cutt off the parts; and they are all now positive, physitians and surgeons, that the guts are in no part, nor in the least degree, touch'd. As they have made evacuations of matter from the wound, the vomitings have ceas'd for several hours; as new matter has been bred, her vomittings have returned; but what she has now taken has staid with her nine, and once eleven, hours.

Her present situation is this: She slept last night better than ever, has not vomitted since two in the morning, has not the least feaver, and her pulse so mended, that they pronounce it now a good pulse; and neither her vomitting nor the matter that comes from the wound has any longer the least smell. They gave her this morning part of a gentle purge, which is divided into three parts, to be taken at three hours distance: the first has staid its time, and the second is given, but nothing has yett pass'd by stool. She has just now made a great quantity of urine, the first, that I can learn, that has been seen of some time. In these circumstances, the physitians all agree that they gain so much ground, that they are full of hopes, but can pronounce no certain safety till a stool comes, which they are now attending.

In this fatall crisis nothing can be said, but we must truly lament what we scarce dare to think of. But

will it ever be believed, that a life of this importance (when there is no room for flattery) should be lost, or run thus near, by concealing human infirmities?

Incurata pudor malus ulcera celat.

I must have done; our distraction and grief wants no relation. I am oppress'd with sorrow and dread.

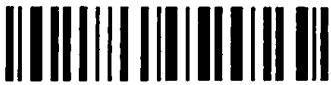
SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

Is desired to prevent the princess of Orange from going to England.

St. James's, Tuesday, half past one.

UPON coming hither I find the family in the greatest confusion with regard to the princess royal. I learn little or nothing was said to her by the last post; but if her royal hyghness has not quite forgott this house, she will not wonder that those that only could, and from whom she might reasonably have expected it, did not dare to send any particular account, when the whole fatal secrett was concealed even from those who were to administer relief. It is now apprehended here, that the princess royal upon the first news, which to be sure will be as bad as can be, may, in surprise and distraction, think of coming over. I write this on purpose to desire that you will use all your reasoning, skill, and influence to prevent any such attempt. It is said you must assume authority, altho' you have none. You will inform her of the whole truth, as you shall, in discretion, think it will have a good or bad effect for the present purpose. I am told she is now at Gumberg, where you must go as soon as you receive this. A messenger is sent with this, that you may see this before the post arrives.

THE END OF VOL. III.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